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Wolfgang Klooss (Ed.)

Wor(l)ds of Trauma

Canadian and German Perspectives

3 Diversity

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IRTG Diversity
Mediating Difference in Transcultural Spaces

Wolfgang Klooss (Ed.)

Wor(l)ds of Trauma

Canadian and German Perspectives

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Table of Contents

Introduction 9
Wolfgang Klooss

Part I Trauma Poems

From *departures*
(with an Introductory Note) 13
Dennis Cooley

Part II Psycho-Social and Political Dimensions of Trauma

Psychological and Clinical Perspectives on Trauma 25
Kristin Husen and Wolfgang Lutz

Towards a Sociology of Trauma
A State of Multiple Incommensurability 39
Martin Endress

Trauma, War, and Diplomacy: An Exploration 57
James Fergusson

Mennomental Issues
Depression and Trauma in Canadian Mennonite(s) Writing 71
Martin Kuester

Part III Re/Voicings of Trauma and Violence

The War After the War
Trauma in George Payerle's Novel *Unknown Soldier* 85
Konrad Gross

Stammer and Song 95
Laurie Ricou

Beyond Processing?
Africa and Agents of Trauma in *Disgrace*, *Hundert Tage,* and
Beasts of No Nation 111
Markus M. Müller

Part IV Re/Visioning and Re/Telling Trauma

From a Historical Trauma to the Palpability of History
The First World War and Its Commemorations in TV-Documentaries 129
Uli Jung

The Second World War and Trauma in the Museum
Canadian and German Depictions in the 21st Century 145
Stephan Jaeger

The Trauma of the After Space
Ethics, Absences, and Anselm Kiefer 165
Katherine E. Walton

Trauma and Taboo
The Holocaust in Recent American Fiction 185
Susanne Rohr

Part V Migrancy, Indigeneity and Trauma

Tales from Firozsha Baag
The Trauma of an Immigrant 201
David Staines

Unwriting Trauma, Unwriting Asia
Post-Ethnic Identity in Madeleine Thien's *Certainty* 211
Ralf Hertel

When Trauma Meets Trauma
Immigrants and Indigenes 221
Hartmut Lutz

Responses to Indigenous Trauma in Canada
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights 231
Robert Schwartzwald

Digitizing Trauma
Embodying Empathy in a Reconstructed Canadian Indian Residential School 249
Adam Muller, Struan Sinclair and Andrew Woolford

Part VI Commemoration

A Tribute to Jo-Ann Episkenew 265
Hartmut Lutz

Contributors 273

Introduction

Wolfgang Klooss

With "trauma" the essays collected in this volume explore a topic, which for decades has received wide attention in the public and the academic world, and add comparative German and Canadian voices to the conversation. At the beginning of the volume Winnipeg writer and critic Dennis Cooley sets the tone for the following scholarly investigations with poetic contemplations on his own traumatic experiences during an extended period of hospitalization. In *departures* which was first released in April 2016, he talks about "the vulnerable body as it passes through the world's stubborn alchemy."

It is not surprising that scholars have been discussing "trauma" intensively in recent years, considering that (collective) experiences of traumatization have not ceased in the 20th or the 21st century. "Trauma" can be experienced individually, collectively (in groups, ethnicities), nationally and globally. The Holocaust, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki still serve as reminders and symbols of large-scale destruction and human suffering. Both globally and locally, conflicts derived from (religious) intolerance, poverty, enforced migration, and resistance to refugees continue to contribute to narratives. Racialized and class-conscious societies have come to reveal the dark sides of humanity. At the same time, there has been a growing focus on the physical and mental consequences of traumatic events on people.

The volume centers around problems and challenges that have received widespread attention, such as the treatment of First Nations and Métis in Canada, cultural genocide, deportation, family destruction, physical and mental abuse by educational, state and church institutions. The forceful relocation of Canada's Japanese population after the attack on Pearl Harbor or the rejection of immigrants from Punjab in Vancouver, also known as the *Komagata Maru* incident, could serve as further historical examples that tell stories of victimization and suffering.

The essay collection offers contributions to the general theme of "trauma" by not only looking at physical-psychological phenomena in personal as well as collective forms of suffering, but also at socio-cultural understanding, whereby a comparative, if not cross-hermeneutic approach, generates both Canadian and German perspectives on the problems. With the exception of one comparative analysis dealing with literary treatments of apartheid and genocide in (South) Africa, case studies focus on Canadian and German issues, while papers with a theoretical orientation exceed this geographical realm. Since this volume is interdisciplinary in scope, it includes contributions from clinical studies and psychology (Kristin Husen, and Wolfgang Lutz), from the social (Martin Endress) and political (James Fergusson) sciences,

Native studies (Hartmut Lutz), literature (Konrad Gross, Ralf Hertel, Martin Kuester, Markus M. Müller, Laurie Ricou, Susanne Rohr, and David Staines), cultural studies (Adam Muller, Robert Schwartzwald, Struan Sinclair, and Andrew Woolford), media and visual studies (Stephan Jaeger, Uli Jung, and Katherine E. Walton).

The essays which are sometimes case studies of an exemplary nature are assembled thematically and do not follow a disciplinary arrangement. Occasionally, academic analysis and personal reflection are combined. This gives some of the contributions a particularly individual tone, allows for different narrative styles, and reflects different disciplinary practices.

For intrinsic reasons post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is repeatedly addressed even in articles from the field of literary criticism,[1] while the act of voicing/writing trauma is often attributed with a therapeutic function. On the thematic level it does not come as a surprise that Germany's severest traumatic experience, the Holocaust, is reiterated in contributions across disciplines. In contrast, several essays with a Canadian focus thematize Native trauma as, for instance, experienced in the Residential Schools that tried to deprive Native children of their indigeneity. It is also due to the thematic scope of the volume that the *Canadian Museum for Human Rights* in Winnipeg, which opened in November 2014, plays a prominent role in a few contributions.

Among the most repeatedly referenced research are studies conducted at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, namely Cathy Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), as well as Dominick LaCapra's *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (1998), and *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001).

Since most of the essays are based on papers delivered at a partnership conference of the University of Manitoba and Trier University (Trier, May 2016), many articles are by scholars from Winnipeg and Trier. Further essays by colleagues from other Canadian and German universities, such as the universities of British Columbia, Montréal, Ottawa and Toronto as well as Greifswald, Hamburg, Marburg, and Kiel enlarge the scope of contributions.

Wor(l)ds of Trauma ends with a brief commemoration (Hartmut Lutz) of Jo-Ann Episkenew, a respected Métis elder and scholar from the *Indigenous Health Research Institute* at the University of Regina. She had agreed to enrich this voulume with a contribution titled "Letting Go of Trauma: Indigenous People and Brainwave Neurofeedback," but died unexpectedly at the beginning of 2016.

Special thanks go to Lutz Schowalter for his editorial suggestions and meticulous proofreading of the manuscript.

Note

1 PTSD is a psychological disorder characterized by severe handicaps in patients' everyday life. Prevalence rates for women are four times higher (3.6%) than for men (0.9%).

Part I
Trauma Poems

From *departures* (with an Introductory Note)

Dennis Cooley

For years I had written about the wayward and mysterious body. Sometimes it appeared in anguish, sometimes in petulance. Often it behaved in comical ineptitude or recalcitrance. One book, *Bloody Jack* (1984), ended with a passage on the appendix – the book's appendix and Cooley's very own. The body figured in yearning and desire and joy. Always it was wondrous. A later book, *soul searching* (1996), played with the tug between mind and body. In another poem the body protests against Cooley's mistreatment and takes its revenge on him. I was always on the side of the maligned and neglected and miraculous body.

Then one day the body – my body – broke out in full rebellion. An exploded appendix in 1995 delivered me to the hospital where I languished in fever and hallucination. Voices spoke to me – very clear and distinct voices. The world was running down, on the verge of extinction, and acrobatic figures swung through bottomless dark trying to mend it. A man pretending to be a painter walked through a door, wiping blood from a cloth he was carrying. Another man, a stick man, leaned terrifyingly over the hospital bed, jerking and flailing. A case perhaps of how close poetry and schizophrenia can be.

When I was finally able to sit up, the heels of my hands were sore and my vision had blurred. I clumsily wrote a raw record of that time – memories of a heat and grinding that went on and on in gritty textures and dust; impossible dreams about parents and grandparents and friends and family and colleagues. I suspected just about everyone of neglect and conspiracy. The dreams included visions of water, glowing plants just up there, up the steps that weren't there; noted the sweetness of air blowing over snow rotting in spring, thoughts of my wife's family home where I might find refuge. I wrote as best I could remember what had happened. I had no idea in what order most of the events had occurred and I had no pattern of them in mind. This was in February.

By that fall I had begun a book. It would be a long poem. It would be long and disjointed to reflect the experience and to situate it as postmodern. I did some research and wrote up more notes. Over the next two decades I worked on other books, but I kept coming back to the manuscript. I kept adding passages, constantly revised what I had, moved parts around. Gradually I became aware of larger and more varied contexts within which I could amplify the story. I wrote still more notes, drafted more pieces. I drew in information that seemed apt and exciting – stuff about the

appendix; the chemical constitution of the body; the swoops and loops of the earth, the moon; the rhythms of agriculture; the story of human evolution; the amazing mechanics of DNA; stories of my own family and childhood. I made more notes, drafted more passages, revised everything. The manuscript got bigger and bigger.

I knew the poem would not be simply narrative. It would draw a conglomeration into the gravitational pull of the event. A lot of the added information came from Bill Bryson's astonishing book *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (2004) and, still later, Diane Ackerman's *An Alchemy of Mind*: *The Marvel and Mystery of the Brain* (2005), a poet's memorable account of our strange brains. The writing quickened with a sense of what could be said, what removed, what altered. The record, I began to see, was thickened with circles and whorls and cycles and descents. I recognized the reassuring sense of a bird in a tree, the implications of desiccation and thirst, and I began to see where those details might take me. The material became less medical, less obsessive. I took up new leads, including what I had written outside of *departures* (2016), and sometimes before it. I wanted to lift the weight of an oppressive sweltering that clung to the notes. The poem steadily became more embedded in larger patterns. It also became more lyrical, more meditative, more extended, more personal, more comical.

In the end (which is to say, by the time I would have to let the book go) I could see that I needed to jettison a lot of what I had hauled into the manuscript at one time or another. Now, twenty years after the event, more focused and radically shortened, the poem tells of the vulnerable body as it passes through the world's stubborn alchemy.

from *departures*:

€

sits at the end of the ward
at the end of the world
it is very cold

.winter squeezes
.through the windows
.at the end of the hall
.at the end of it all

february, his feet cold. always cold.

a horrendously distended stomach fastened to a machine
Sits in an orange robe
he will lose in Kraków.

Could be a squash growing from a pole.
Could be a pumpkin among dead vines.
Could be king of the gourds.

a long tuber
fatter than earth
no softer than
a white radish
a spaghetti squash
feeds from the shining tube
they hold him under
drop him from
would be a plant drinking from the window
the glass a shine of water
its cold clear wetness

he will die in the high cold night

€

they say wind cannot dry it
fire cannot consume it
water cannot wet
nor earth rot

our days yes are fields
are as the fields of grass
we are made to lie down in
but to lie together in them
smell the crushed grain & flowers
the small dust of their perfume
fallen dust of the world

the sweet bundles of flesh
we have only now to touch

€

genetics is we can agree
what most matters
to you is postmodern

there being dissonance
in such matters generally
it is generic of a kind unkindly

yet in gestation generous & in generation
plenty of noise in the system
stray chunks & trays of broken pieces
in odd places add
nothing it seems to the whole

no one knows what
it is doing there or what
it does it doesn't
do much of anything
as far as we can see
what good is it

a few strands
with no discernible purpose
or intelligible affect
and an awful lot of garbage

€

the shouts & whispers
the body vibrates
the illicit romance
every clasp and spasm
the endless chemical gossip
gabba gabba gabba
working the gaps
its small & inaudible gasps

psst ppstt presses the doors
in yeas & nays slamming
/open and shut

speaks surprise & yearning
Heraclitus heard and knew
was the world spinning

€

Thursday 700 am
a gauze mask on the earth's face
the fields numb from sleeping
morning bleak with february

Cars drag themselves across the parking lot
nudge over sheets of dirty metal
clench against the cold.
All turn to face the same
way, watch through their
lights where they wait to enter.

Hunch against the wind, try to
keep their breath close, their
exhalations from freezing in the air.

Their lights spray onto the air
shove the cold through the glass
he watches through. The cold
presses him into the chair.

€

7 years for the body
to replace it
self completely new
except the same
old self everyone can tell
it's you & yet
it's not
you you are no longer you the same

things have changed and you are now not you
even though you are the same
bump where the finger broke
same slicing up & across
same long
boney feet same madness
for rhyme & pun same black
hair only grayer
you:
entirely different all the same

is it really you
you will say when i replaces me
where then will you be when
i get a new me & you you too
get a new me also a new you
how can i say i knew you
then we too who knew
who could believe are new again
who will we be when we are new

who knew you will say
who knew who could poss
ibly know or passably say
how we could know
one another now
and then

€

passes across the world
a sheet of piss-yellow
they tear & wrap
around bodies

long slow nights
every car pulls
the sheet up
yanks it
\down

€

Something more is called for, some thing for which a gentleman would give his last farthing. Farting like an old dray horse would seem what's needed. It seems such a fair thing, in the end a far better thing, if he were to produce at least one single ting, a near or far ting. That would not be asking too much, surely. That would be perfectly reasonable.

Heads bowed, in solicitation prayerful, in genuflection solemn, in hope beseeching. A tingling. A tin ting, a tintinnabulation. That the pneuma might pass them over, and the spirit dwell among, they bend and peer, stand and listen. An elision in time, the world's lesions. Kyrie Eleison, morning noon and night time too.

All this have they done for him. How in the final analysis can he let them down? Has not he, like them, fallen out of the fiery comets and the storming gasses?

All they ask is a fart or two.
Are you hungry?
No, he isn't.

G., a burly man, huffles in, thick-sweatered. Seems faintly baffled. Hey, hi, pleased to see him, laughs when G. arrives to report. They're holding steady, steady as she goes. Waiting for gas.

They are expecting a break-through any day now, a new lease on life.
Time for release. And an appeasing of the gods.
Something in which to be exceedingly glad.
Something big.
Any day now.

Time to fizz. Time to fizzle.
time to break out
time to break wind.

€

—

Wakes him. Wakes him from dream. Wake up she says. The one who knows in her heart he is defective. Hurries in, happy to have caught him. She has got him dead to rights. Wake up Wake up.

She has identified him as a malingerer, arraigned him for weakness. A feckless man.

Justlikeaman. Justllikeaman. Hers a strange courting.

—

wish she understood
the way the wind blows
(wish i knew)
when you are bone tired
and she is too

Time to get up,
you better wake up,
you're beginning to talk.
To yourself.

A termagant. A harridan.
A hurricane of disapprovings.

Krankenhaus the germans call it
The hospital that is and this lady
Though not german
is certainly kranken
germ to his well-being
more than a little inhospitable

snip of mouth
slice of speech
her scissored talk

oh no no no
a pleasant dream
talking with a friend David
a friend's talk

✘✕✕✘

○ now what now what
○ now what has he done now

sugar in the morning
sugar in the evening

Big Blonde bustles in dispensing
judgments with a pharmaceutical zeal

- ✓ 2 each morning
- ✓ 3 at noon and
- ✓ 1 before bedtime
- ✓

the rounds of her displeasures
sounds of the world's but mostly his failures
regularly checks the cabinet of her displeasure
resolute to keep the dispensary full
and cooley on a proper regimen

€

he has got his wish
she has taken
his body sewn
shut she has
picked it up &
taken it home

He considers the contours of things,
the symmetry of chairs,
the misshapen body,
the roundness of water.

€

Cooley re-enters
the coiled and calling world
carries with him
a slashed and bulging stomach.
recalls Megan's own incisions.

Stirs in five-toed affection.
A tad slow, a low-lying
slow-breathing cloud. A sloth.
A little root-bound.
Moves with the ease of a rutabaga.
A flat-footed platypus trying to break out.

Follows the thread all the way out of the play pen.

Newly escaped and rotund.
Definitely rotund.
Definitely not Houdini.

his appendix
has up & left him
he will not miss it
not one little bit

two large patches of white
suddenly appear in his hair
one on each side

€

He makes plans for Germany —

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Part II
Psycho-Social and Political Dimensions of Trauma

Psychological and Clinical Perspectives on Trauma

Kristin Husen and Wolfgang Lutz

1. Basics about PTSD and Treatment from the Clinical Psychology Perspective

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a serious psychological condition that can occur as a result of experiencing a traumatic event. The requirement of an external event as a trigger of psychological distress that potentially follows distinguishes PTSD from most other psychological disorders. According to the A criterion of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM; see American Psychiatric Association), the DSM is the most widely accepted nomenclature used by clinicians and researchers for the classification of mental disorders. The precondition for developing PTSD involves

> exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways: (1) Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s). (2) Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it/they occurred to others. (3) Learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or friend, the event(s) must have been violent or accidental. (4) Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s) (e. g. first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse). (American Psychiatric Association 271)

Criterion A4 is restricted, as it "does not apply to exposure through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures, unless this exposure is work related." (American Psychiatric Association 271) Different kinds of traumatic events can be distinguished. L.C. Terr introduced the differentiation between *Type-I* and *Type-II (or complex) Trauma. Type-I Trauma* refers to single-incident trauma that is brief in duration, e. g. a sudden and unexpected trauma, a single episode or experience of trauma, whereas *Type-II Trauma* refers to prolonged, repeated exposure, e. g. sexual abuse. Additionally, trauma can be differentiated into accidental or man-made. Examples of the four types of traumatic events that arise from these distinctions are provided in Table 1.

The key symptoms that characterize PTSD are (1) intrusions, i. e. reliving the traumatic event or frightening elements of it by means of intrusive memories, nightmares or flashbacks; (2) avoidance of trauma-related stimuli, such as thoughts, memories, people, and places associated with the event; (3) symptoms of elevated arousal, i. e. irritable, aggressive, self-destructive or reckless behavior, hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response, concentration problems, sleep disturbance; and (4) negative alterations in cognitions and mood.

Table 1: Types of Traumatic Events

	Accidental Trauma	**Man-Made Trauma**
Type-I (Mono) – Short-Lasting	Traffic Accidents	Criminal & Physical Violence
	Industrial Injuries	Sexual Abuse/Rape
	Natural Disasters (Short)	
Type-II (Poly) – Long-Lasting	Long-lasting Natural Disasters	Sexual & Physical Abuse in Childhood
	Technical Disasters	War Experiences
		Torture, Political Imprisonment

PTSD is a complex condition that is associated with significant morbidity, disability, and impairment of life functions. Furthermore PTSD is oftentimes accompanied by an array of other psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, substance abuse, mood disorders, somatoform disorders, dissociative disorders or personality disorders. Comorbid disorders commonly develop due to dysfunctional strategies a person suffering from PTSD uses to cope with PTSD symptoms. The disorder is associated with a distinctly increased risk of suicide.

The lifetime prevalence of PTSD is approximately 5% to 8% for men and 10% for women. The conditional probability, i. e. the risk of developing PTSD after a traumatic event, is 8% for men and 20% for women. Differences in conditional probabilities can be explained by the fact that events vary considerably in their probability of precipitating PTSD (see Norris and Slone). The spontaneous remission rates of PTSD within the first year after a traumatic event are at 50% – a fact that speaks against certain types of interventions such as Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) (cf. Mitchell). Debriefing is a psychological first aid intervention strategy, which is provided to small groups of trauma victims typically within 24 to 72 hours after the traumatic event. Reviews of debriefing have shown no effects with regard to helping prevent the onset of PTSD or reducing psychological distress (see Rose, Bisson, Churchill and Wessely). On the contrary, some studies have identified counterproductive effects of debriefing, i. e. increased PTSD risk. These negative effects may be due to the setting in small groups, which facilitates mutual destabilization during the acute phase of emotional instability and lability. The goal of psychological emergency aid should be pacification and alienation.

Protective factors against PTSD encompass for instance a good sense of coherence, social support, high socio-economic status and functional coping strategies. Risk factors are subdivided into pre-, peri-, and post-traumatic risk factors. Among the pre-traumatic risk factors are for example lack of social support, poverty of parents, female gender, prior mental disorder(s) or a family history of mental disorders. Peri-traumatic factors encompass e. g. length, extent and repetition of traumatic impact, subjective experience of threat, other connected traumatic events, peri-traumatic emotional reaction and peri-traumatic dissociation. Post-traumatic

factors are for instance lack of social support, continuous negative life events, lack of recognition as a victim and secondary stress factors (see Maercker).

During traumatic experiences information processing is disturbed. This leads to traumatic memory, which differs from usual memory, because the memory consolidation process seems to fail. Therefore, the traumatic memory trace stays predominantly located in subcortical and primary perceptual areas, leaving it tightly coupled to its autonomic and perceptual markers, and lacking appropriate integration into autobiographical, cortical memory networks. Subsequently the result of exposure to a trauma trigger is a solely involuntarily retrieved memory trace (intrusion) that is very hard to verbalize, often fragmented in time. It consists, for the most part, of primary sensory information (images, smells, sounds) that are linked to physiological fear symptoms. Due to the lack of autobiographical context, the memory is relived as if things were happening in the present. Thus, the failure to properly consolidate and thus emotionally process potentially traumatic memories may form the neural basis of key PTSD symptoms such as unwanted memories, intrusive flashbacks, nightmares, hyperarousal, and dissociation. Reduction of PTSD symptoms can be achieved by successfully transferring trauma memory to pre-existent, cortical memory circuits (cf. van Hein).

This later aspect has immediate consequences for treatment guidelines. Trauma treatment is usually divided into different phases: (1) Stabilization; (2) Confrontation; (3) Integration. The first phase includes the establishment of the therapeutic relationship and frame for treatment, the provision of short-term relief and the stabilization of the patient by enhancing coping skills to help make symptoms more manageable. The second and third phases (confrontation and integration) entail working through the traumatic experiences and integrating the traumatic event. Before entering into the second phase of treatment, it must be ensured that the patient's life circumstances are safe and secure. The risk of re-traumatization must be excluded, which for example in the case of sexual abuse requires that the patient is not living in the same household as the offender. If these requirements for confrontation are not met, treatment phase 2 cannot be initiated. The third and last treatment phase includes furthering the integration process as well as self and relational development. Different protocols for trauma treatment exist. Many of these include cognitive methods which for example are applied to the treatment of disturbed concepts of the self and others.

2. Monitoring and Feedback System at the Outpatient Clinic of Trier University

Unfortunately, psychologists are not immune to the so-called better-than-average (BTA) effect. Like in many other professions, therapists regularly overestimate the

probability of positive therapy outcomes. On average, therapists rate their own skills on the 80% level and no one rates their own skills below the 50% level in comparison to all other therapists (cf. Walfish, McAlister, O'Donnell and Lambert; Hannan, Lambert, Harmon, Nielsen, Smart, Shimokawa and Sutton). Although one can argue that the better-than-average effect is good for the therapist's conviction of being helpful to the patient, which is certainly beneficial for the therapeutic process, it also shows that our perception as therapists is selective and indications of deterioration or treatment failure can quickly be overlooked.

Additionally, practitioners are often faced with the question, whether an intervention, which has proved to be effective on average, also works for the individual patient. This essential question has fostered a paradigm shift from treatment- to patient-focused research (PFR) (see Lutz and Rubel). PFR evaluates whether generally successful treatments also show positive effects for an individual patient and analyzes how this treatment can be adapted to improve individual treatment outcome. To achieve this goal, information from the treatment process is used to optimize clinical decision-making at the beginning, during, and at the end of treatments. In doing so, differential adaptations of the treatment process can be provided to avoid treatment failure and to guarantee the best possible treatment outcome for an individual patient (see Lambert, Hansen and Finch; Lutz and Böhnke). Patient-focused psychotherapy research attempts to broaden nomothetic research results by integrating idiographic elements and thereby adding to the research field's practice orientation. Statistical developments, which allow the combination of nomothetic and idiographic elements when analyzing treatment data (e. g. hierarchical linear models), open up new possibilities in this area of research.

Patient-focused psychotherapy research requires close monitoring of the developments an individual patient undergoes during different phases of the treatment process and the feedback of this information to the therapist (cf. Lambert 2007; Lutz 2002). Feedback tools can be based on empirical data or rational decision strategies. These tools allow practitioners to track individual progress and adapt ongoing treatment, especially for patients with an early negative development. PFR therefore establishes a constant exchange between research and practice. Furthermore, data generated in settings following a patient-focused research paradigm can be used for supervision or, on a systems level, as part of an evaluation or quality management system (see Lutz, de Jong and Rubel). The monitoring process involves repeated assessments – usually during every therapy session – and allows the investigation of typical change patterns over the entire treatment period. These typical change patterns are essential to therapists as a reference point for the decision, whether the change observed for an individual patient corresponds to expected change trajectories, or whether it deviates from the expected course. Feedback studies have provided clear evidence of the fact that treatments show enhanced effects when therapists are provided with feedback of their patients' progress (cf. for example

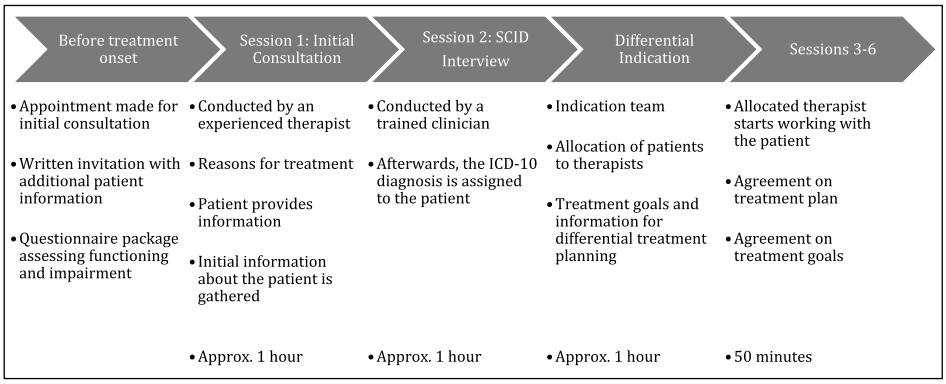

Figure 1: Clinical Diagnostics Process at the University of Trier's Outpatient Center

Lambert and Shimokawa) – especially when therapists are committed to actually using the feedback provided (see De Jong, van Sluis, Nugter, Heiser and Spinhoven). A possible explanation of these findings could be the repeatedly detected result that therapists overestimate their patient's progress during treatment (cf. Breslin, Sobell, Sobell, Buchan and Cunningham; Hannan, Lambert, Harmon, Nielsen, Smart, Shimokawa and Sutton; Hatfield, McCullough, Frantz and Krieger; Walfish, McAlister, O'Donnel and Lambert). This overestimation bias is especially harmful to patients who do not profit from or even deteriorate during treatment. Especially for these cases, empirically derived decision rules can help the therapist to detect patients showing negative developments early during treatment and adapt treatment strategies accordingly (see Lambert 2007; Lambert and Shimokawa). Therapists can be supported in their evaluations and judgements by sophisticated monitoring and feedback systems.

The outpatient clinic at the University of Trier applies one of the most sophisticated monitoring and feedback systems worldwide. Modern technology is integrated at different stages of the psychotherapeutic process to support treatment planning, monitor treatment progress, to evaluate outcomes and foster research. This set-up allows in-depth-research at different stages of treatment and even before its onset to predict clinical courses and help to select, adapt and therefore individualize treatment strategies (see Husen, Rafaeli, Rubel, Bar-Kalifa and Lutz). The clinical diagnostics process encompasses several sessions at the beginning of a treatment (see Figure 1).

In the context of the differential treatment planning process, the first face-to-face interaction after answering a comprehensive set of questionnaires is the initial consultation appointment led by one of the outpatient center's senior clinicians. Alongside medical and family history and possible diagnoses, this diagnostic session encompasses the patient's current symptoms, life circumstances, resources, and personal goals. The exploration of life circumstances is especially important for

treatment planning in PTSD cases, since – as mentioned above – certain interventions can only be initiated if a safe environment for the patient can be guaranteed. In the second session, a second therapist conducts the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM Disorders (SCID). The results from the questionnaire set, the initial consultation and the SCID are fed back to an expert team of senior clinicians (indication team). They use this information, as well as an excerpt of the video recording from one of the first sessions to agree on differential treatment recommendations that are handed over to the therapist chosen by the team, who then works with the patient. A thorough diagnostic process is crucial, especially for patients diagnosed with PTSD, as comorbidity and suicidality are widespread among PTSD patients. As soon as the patient is allocated to his/her therapist, they both agree on a treatment plan and treatment goals. During treatment, after every fifth session, the patient rates the development.

Professor Lutz's research team at the Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy (University of Trier) has studied individual patterns of change during psychotherapeutic treatment for many years (cf. Lutz and Böhnke). As a result, monitoring the continuous changes a patient undergoes during treatment plays a prominent role in the outpatient clinic. Patients fill out a questionnaire before and after each therapeutic session, which usually takes place once a week. For this reason, every room used for therapy is supplied with a touch screen system. The measured course of treatment is fed back to the therapist via a feedback portal. Every therapist can log in to check the individual treatment courses of his/her patients with regard to different outcome measures. Red signals help the therapist to detect negative developments on different scales (e. g. the therapeutic relationship, suicidality etc.). If a red signal shows, clinical support tools are offered simultaneously to help the therapist choose a suitable intervention to adapt the treatment.

Recent studies have shown that a considerable amount of patients responds early to treatment (cf. Rubel, Lutz, Kopta, Köck, Zimmermann, Minami and Saunders), but there is still a considerable amount of patients who do not profit from treatment. Previous research has generated initial results supporting the assumption that monitoring treatment courses and feeding the resulting information back to the therapist can help prevent treatment failure (see Lambert, Hansen and Finch; Lutz and Böhnke; Lambert and Shimokawa; De Jong, van Sluis, Nugter, Heiser and Spinhoven).

3. Case Example

A patient who is transferred to the outpatient center, for example from the local women's crisis center (an institution cooperating with the outpatient center), and who is potentially suffering from PTSD receives an appointment for an initial con-

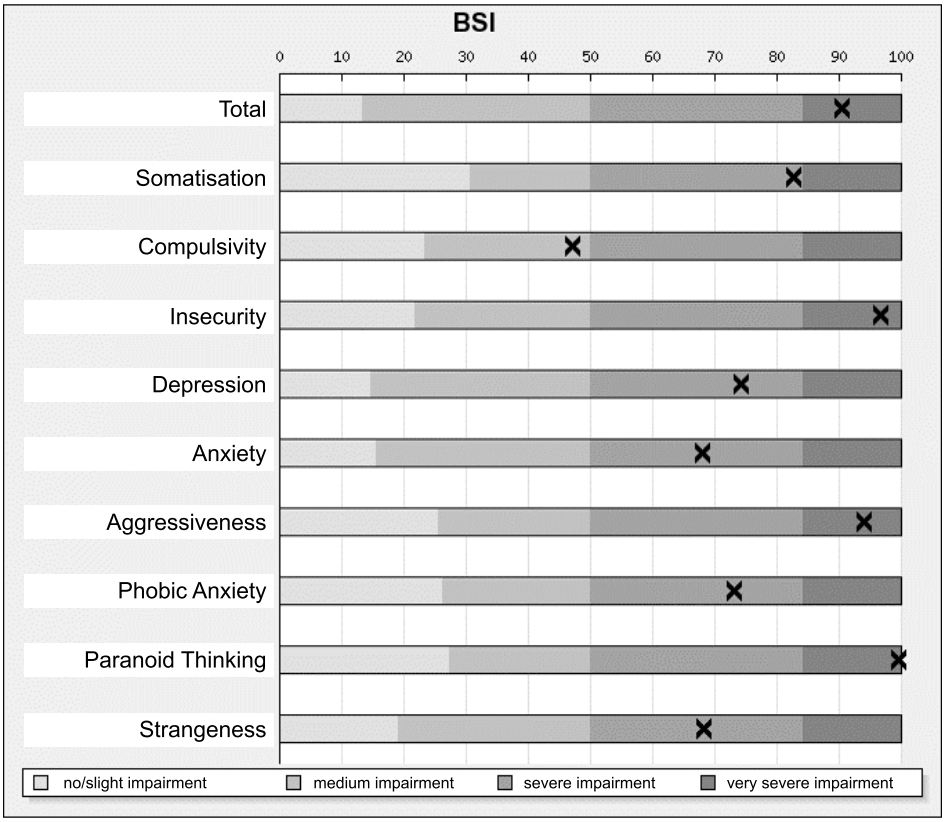

Figure 2: Status Feedback of the BSI before Treatment Onset for a Hypothetical Patient Suffering from PTSD

sultation after a short waiting period. Before she comes in for this initial appointment, she submits a questionnaire set, which assesses her current level of impairment on different measures. If the therapist confirms the suspected diagnosis during the initial consultation, trauma-specific questionnaires like the Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale (PDS) are given to the patient (see Foa, Cashman, Jaycox and Perry), or the Civilian Version of the PTSD-Checklist (cf. Blevins, Weathers, Davis, Witte and Domino). The results from all instruments measuring general impairment levels – i. e. Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) (see Derogatis and Melisaratos) – are fed back to the therapist as a status report before treatment onset (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 indicates that the hypothetical PTSD patient shows high impairment levels on almost all BSI scales except for compulsivity, where she shows medium impairment levels.

Figure 3 shows status feedback of the trauma-specific instrument, which is administered before treatment onset.

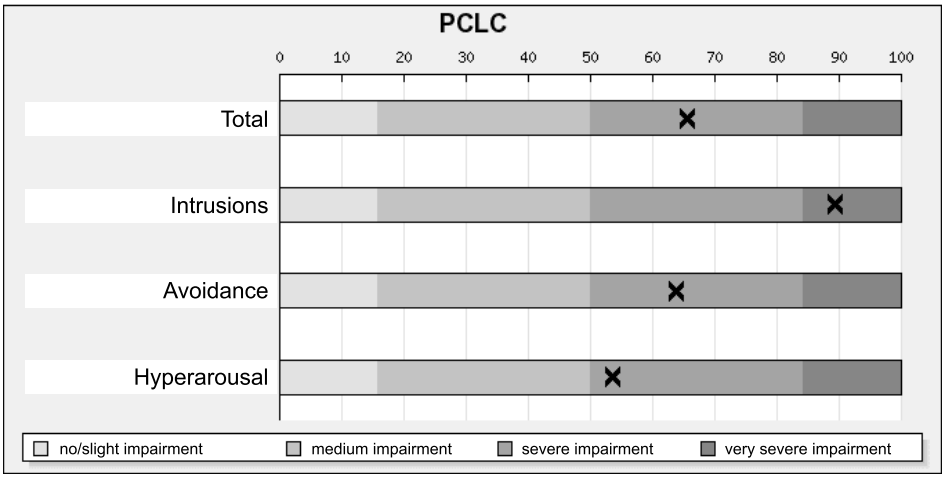

Figure 3: Status Feedback of the PCL-C before Treatment Onset for a Hypothetical Patient Suffering from PTSD

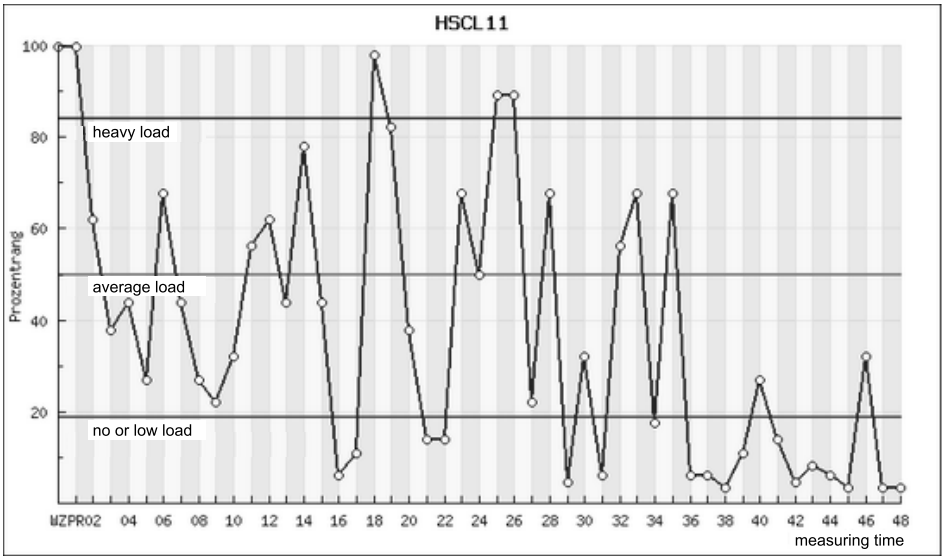

Figure 4: Feedback on the Course of Treatment of a Hypothetical PTSD Patient Measured by the HSCL-11

The feedback from the trauma-specific instrument at treatment onset shows very high impairment levels on the intrusion scale, and high impairment on the arousal, avoidance and total scales (see Figure 3).

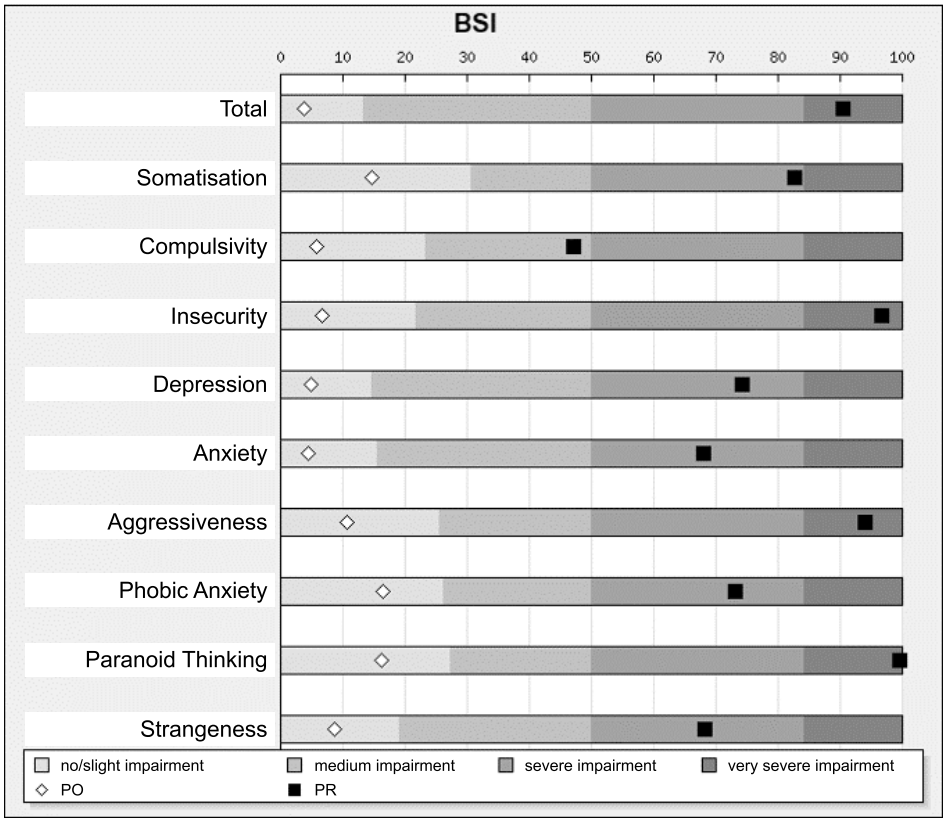

Figure 5: Pre-Post Comparisons of Impairment Levels of a Hypothetical PTSD Patient Measured by the BSI

After treatment has begun, the therapist receives feedback on the course of treatment after each therapeutic session. Figure 4 shows the course of treatment for the hypothetical PTSD patient, who starts out with very high impairment levels, measured by the Hopkins-Symptom-Checklist (HSCL) (cf. Lutz, Tholen, Schürch and Berking).

At the end of treatment, pre-post comparisons can be drawn from the instruments that are administered at the beginning and end of treatment to evaluate treatment results.

For the hypothetical PTSD patient, Figure 5 shows significant reductions in impairment levels on all BSI scales.

Significant reductions in trauma-specific symptoms can also be shown by comparing the patient's pre- and post-scores on the PCL-C (see Figure 6).

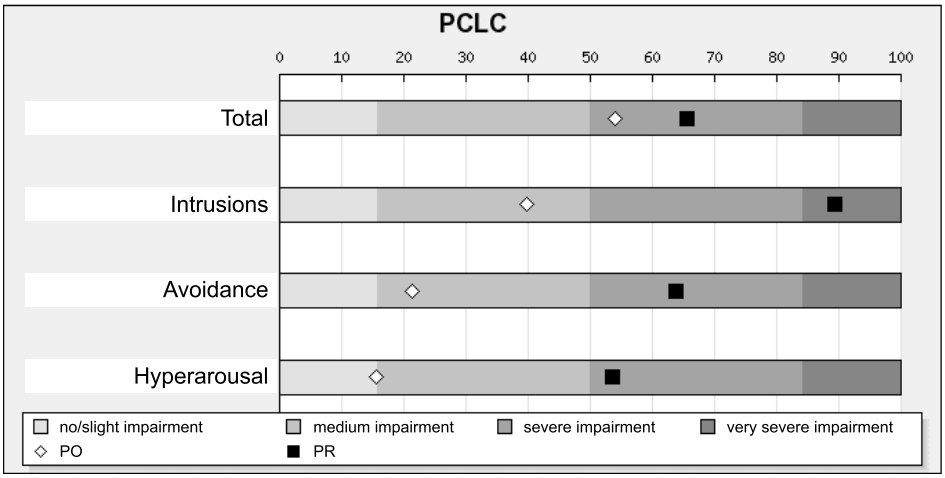

Figure 6: Pre-Post Comparisons of Trauma Symptoms of a Hypothetical PTSD Patient Measured by the PCL-C

This hypothetical case example indicates that PTSD is treatable in outpatient settings. When the effect sizes of treatments of patients with any diagnosis but PTSD are compared to the effect sizes of PTSD treatments in the University of Trier's outpatient center, no significant differences can be detected (see Lutz, Schiefele, Wucherpfennig and Stulz; Figure 7).

Figure 7 shows that on average PTSD patients start treatment with higher impairment – as measured by the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) (cf. Derogatis 1992) –, but that treatment is equally beneficial, which becomes visible by similar BSI scores at the end of treatment and almost identical to pre-to-post effect sizes. (Indicated are Cohen's d-effect sizes of treatment; the stated effect sizes indicate large treatment effects for both patient groups.)

We conclude that PTSD is a complex disorder that requires a thorough diagnostic process and close treatment monitoring. If these requirements are met and therapists adhere to treatment guidelines and empirically based treatment approaches, PTSD is a disorder that can be treated successfully in in- and outpatient settings.

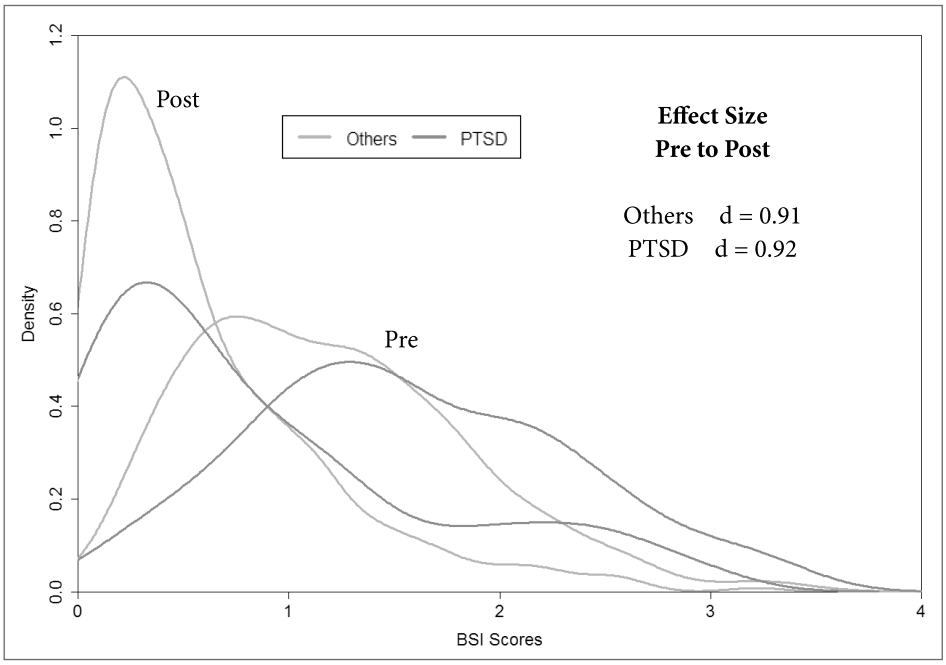

Figure 7: Density Plot of Effect Sizes Comparing PTSD Patients (N = 103) with Patients with Other Diagnoses (N = 772) Treated at the University of Trier's Outpatient Center

Note

The *German Research Foundation* (DFG) is funding a comprehensive study at the University of Trier's outpatient center that analyses session by session assessments with feedback vs. without feedback vs. with feedback plus clinical support tools to gain further insight into their differential effects for treatment courses and outcomes. (DFG grant nos. LU 660/8–1 and LU 660/10–1 to Prof. Lutz.)

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Towards a Sociology of Trauma
A State of Multiple Incommensurability

Martin Endress

Introduction

To introduce the topic of this paper, I draw on two quotations.

1. What would I have needed? A big social centre to come back to with a huge group of people coming and going was not the best place to come back to. I would have needed a safe space with a small intimate group of people I could relate to and trust and who cared about me. … I am back to life now. Can go to demos again. Took a while, but I am back. Not quite doing actions again. Still steps to go … I learnt lots. About myself. About people. About our struggle. What I lived made me stronger. I know who I am and what I believe in (activist-trauma.net. 10–15).
2. Two, three months after the mission we had a psychological support. … There we had group sessions. … If it helped? I cannot affirm that in my case. For me, talking with my comrades during the mission was more important. This was more useful to me than this post-processing seminar, I think (Scherzinger 193 f.).

These quotations come from two different communities. They address the way in which traumatizing political violence can be dealt with. In the first case an activist speaks about the aftermath of a demonstration where s/he experienced traumatizing police violence. The second speaker is a German soldier who served on a mission in Afghanistan. Apart from the differences in their traumatizing experiences, both reflect the significance of their respective communities for the process of recovering from trauma. In such cases the traumatizing experiences result from interpersonal violence that is experienced as a violation of one's physical as well as psychic integrity or, to put it differently, a violence that shatters trust in oneself, the world, and thus destroys sociability. But even though violence is a central topic in sociology and the question of sociability is central to sociological research interests in general, a sociological approach to trauma, and in particular to the interpersonal relations in which trust is recovered, has, up to this point, been virtually absent in the field of trauma research.

Violence has an immediate impact on the experience of human vulnerability. I understand violence as a situation that impairs the principles of human encounters. In experiences of violence, one needs to speak of a shattered claim of one's integrity. Without going into detail here, I will argue that violence should be understood as

a negation of sociality (see Endress. "Entgrenzung des Menschlichen" and "Grundlagenprobleme"). As such, it is closely related to a basic mode of trust in relation to people's self-awareness, their relation to others as well as 'to the world'. Since being violated affects one's capacity to encounter others and the world as well as one's self-understanding and potentiality to act, one can argue that experiences of violence might lead to a fundamental shattering of trust (see Endress and Pabst). Shattered trust in oneself, in others and in the world is what I understand here as traumatizing and traumatic experiences.[1]

In my understanding shattered trust is induced by interpersonal violence. Therefore I focus on traumatizing and traumatic experiences and their social implications. Such an analysis is rare within the discipline of sociology and what follows is an attempt to offer a systematic heuristic approach to the study of the social implications of trauma.

In the case of experienced violence, one would have to speak of a fundamental shattering of a person's claim to be treated with respect.[2] Following this line of argument we can describe the relation between violence and *basic (operating) trust* as a specific dynamic (temporal), intensity (objective) and intimacy (social) of vulnerability. Violence creates and is created in asymmetrical situations. It is an expression of the same, while it reproduces these situations simultaneously. As the predominantly psychological research shows, the destruction of relationships is primarily caused by traumata. Feelings of isolation and alienation are frequently mentioned in the respective literature (see, e. g., Foy, Eriksson and Trice 246; Stolorow 2007: 13 f.). The impact traumatizing experiences have on relationships and moral values are just as immediate as the impact on psychological structures. So far, the social aspects of traumatizing experiences have hardly been analysed from a sociological point of view.

Thus, opening my argument with some remarks on different modes of trust, I will outline the contours of *basic (operating) trust* which is understood as one's fundamental relationship to oneself, to others, and to the world. Accordingly, *basic (operating) trust* constitutes the 'background' for both habitual and reflexive trust. While *habitual trust* can be (re-)established through training, and while *reflexive trust* refers to the rational calculation of risks, *basic trust* cannot be 'established' as such. Therefore, an analysis and an empirical illustration of *basic trust* in its operative mode has to be accomplished *ex negativo* by focusing on vulnerability and violence. Here, my example will be from the field of political activism. Such an approach allows us to consider traumatizing and traumatic experiences caused by interpersonal violence as key phenomena for a loss of operating trust. The implications of such traumata – understood as fundamentally shaking the relationship to oneself, to the world, and to others – will subsequently be illustrated.

1. Modes of Trust and the Idea of *Basic (Operating) Trust*

My analysis will focus on harmed basic (operating) trust as well as the question of its 'recoverability.'[3] Before going into more detail, some clarification concerning the concept as well as the phenomenon of trust is needed. In doing so, I will first try to clarify the typology of modes of trust, i. e. the differentiation between reflexive trust, habitual trust, and basic (operating) trust (see for more detailed explanations of this approach Endress 2002, "Foundations of Trust", 2010, 2012 and "Structures of Belonging").

As a starting point we can use Edmund Husserl's differentiation between "functioning" or "operating" (*fungieren*) and "thematizing" *(thematisieren*) that he especially developed in his later works (111). Husserl shows that, for systematic reasons, we have to differentiate between acting, i. e., the process of action, and the process of reflecting on this action. The crucial point here is the basic anthropological difference between being-a-body (*Leib sein*) and having-a-body (*Körper haben*). Considering this difference, on the one hand, each person is a body and, on the other, can thematize this body.[4] According to Husserl the same holds true with respect to action analysis. As he argues, "we [are] always functioning as subjects of acting, but [we are] only occasionally thematically objective" (111).[5] In exactly this sense I differentiate between trust as a non-thematic and constitutionally operative mode, which is a resource not at one's disposal, i. e., basic (operating) trust, and, on the other hand, trust as a cognitive ascertainment, a cognitively more or less explicit mode. And as regards the latter, we can further differentiate between a primarily implicit and a dominantly explicit or thematic mode, that is between habitual trust and reflexive trust.

Accordingly, "basic (operating) trust" can be understood as a constitutive mode of trust, "habitual trust" as the pragmatically effective fundament of routine and as the product of interaction, and, finally, "reflexive trust" as a calculative mode and strategic resource of action. In other words: while reflexive trust is thematized per definition, and habitual trust might be thematized, or at least could be theoretically thematized, "basic (operating) trust" is essentially introduced as pre-thematic, i. e., it cannot be thematized for systematic reasons.[6] Basic trust appears to be the central phenomenon in question when one talks about trust. This mode of trust, which carries social actions and relations in the sense of a necessarily concomitant resource, seems to be a persisting background premise, which is not dispensable.[7] We are confronted with a pragmatically effective mode of habitual trust that needs to be understood as the basis for any successful outcome of social relationships as well as the basis for accustomed everyday actions, and as a constitutive mode of basic (operating) trust which is indispensable and essential (not empirical, but constitutional) for any action or interaction. Therefore, the type of "reflexive trust" cannot be

seen as the primary or central, and even much less the only resource for cooperative action, social relationships or institutional arrangements.

As I will argue here: "Basic (operating) trust" can only be researched through an examination of the different forms of harm caused by manifold types of violence. This is due to the fact that a 'positive' finding of trust always refers to its reflexive or habitual forms and not to the genuine quality of the phenomenon in question. Consequently, traumatizing and traumatic experiences caused by interpersonal violence should be considered as a key to an understanding of the phenomenon of "basic trust," since the latter can only be grasped *ex negativo*.

2. Shattered Trust: Traumatic Experiences and their Implications[8]

Pivotal aspects of "basic (operating) trust" are physical and psychic integrity. At the same time, vulnerability and the power to violate are fundamental characteristics of humans and their socialization (Popitz 44). In order to understand the nature of traumatizing and traumatic experiences more precisely I would like to pay attention to the German distinction between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* which both translate as 'experience.' *Erlebnis* is targeted on a certain situation in its subjective meaning and thus avoids objectified readings of an event. It should be understood as a psychosomatic form of experiencing. *Erfahrung* comprises a reflexive awareness about an *Erlebnis*. I choose the expressions *traumatizing* (referring to "Erlebnis") and *traumatic* (referring to "Erfahrung") experiences to point to this difference. It refers to the difference between the 'body that I am' (the lived body) and the 'body that I have:' traumatizing experiences shatter our very being, they leave their psychosomatic marks; traumatic experience refers to the reflective and reflexive consciousness about a traumatizing experience. Both, traumatizing as well as traumatic experiences, are typically mixed up or intermingled in the concept of trauma. Therefore, it is of crucial importance for the current analysis to keep in mind that only for a traumatic experience – which is consciously remembered – sustainable coping strategies can be developed in order to integrate the trauma into one's life (see Bettelheim 1979).

The distinction between traumatizing and traumatic experience also points out that there is no such thing as a traumatizing or traumatic *event*. Speaking of a traumatizing or traumatic event would mean to externalize the trauma and to suggest an objectivization of trauma. Focusing on experience is in line with the assumption that there are events that have a traumatizing effect on everyone involved.[9] I am aware of the political and ethical implications of approaching trauma via experience. Therefore, I want to emphasize that the differentiation between the violation of one's integrity and trauma is useful not only analytically. It is also useful because, in a political and ethical sense, the question of the violation of one's integrity, and thereby a focus on the general human characteristic of vulnerability, needs to be stressed. Oth-

erwise one falls into the same trap politicians dealing with trauma fell into during the aftermath of World War II, when they tried to subjectify the trauma by arguing that traumatized people had already been mentally unstable before the traumatizing experience.[10] Instead, vulnerability is a general characteristic of all human beings. It is the basis for the potential of being violated (see Liebsch) or traumatized (see Bernet). I am not denying that human beings might experience situations in a similar way.[11] But my focal point remains on the individual with his/her experience – and not on the event itself.

People experience the same situations in diverse ways. Depending on their respective coping strategies and their so-called "resilience," (McFarlane and Yehuda; Endress 2015) the very same event that is traumatizing for one person does not have to be such a shaking experience for someone else and is – or might be – followed by different symptoms. All humans are vulnerable, but what they experience as a violation may differ from one person to another. In a similar way, all humans can be traumatized. However, what people experience as traumatizing varies significantly.[12]

When studying trauma as a form of shattering human sociability, the logic of sociological research requires a concentration on the symptoms of trauma which have implications for interpersonal relationships. These are: 2.1 a shattered spatial experience, 2.2 a shattered experience of time, 2.3 a shattered self-awareness and perception of others – and as a result of the above mentioned aspects, 2.4 a shattered memory in the sense of a trauma memory as well as finally, 2.5 an inability to communicate the experienced, a speechlessness with regard to the traumatizing experience.

2.1 Shattered Experience of Space

From a sociological perspective, spaces are of interest as relational frameworks. They come into existence through the interactions between humans and their relations to objects, structures, and places (see Bourdieu 1989, 1991; de Certeau; Löw). Such an understanding of space is inseparably linked with temporality (see 2.2).

Dissociation – i. e. the separation from one's self – can be understood as an inner retreat or an inward flight behaviour. This is how people describe their traumatic experiences when, for instance, they perceive themselves as floating above things. It can, however, also be observed in the form of a long-lasting emergence of separate personalities (dissociative identity disorder, 'multiple personality'). Depending on time and location, different personalities come to the surface, substantially determining the current situation. Physical locations and social spaces can be re-traumatizing and are therefore avoided.[13] Spaces themselves can alter through perception (see Löw 195 f.) and become 'spaces of fear.' The perception of one's own body space alters through a violently induced, traumatizing experience (see 2.3). It can be un-

derstood as a fundamental injury of the "egocentric reservations of one's self." (Goffman 1971: 86). An erratic changing between distance and closeness (see Goffman's concept of territories of self), as it is typical for a deranged bonding behaviour, also arises from a body space that is becoming apathetic. Another example for such a 'space of fear' can be identified in Bourdieu's analysis of the "agoraphobia" of women (2001) who rule themselves out of the public space from which they have historically been excluded.

2.2 Shattered Experience of Time

Temporality is to be understood as a characteristic of any kind of social action (for classical references see Schutz; Luckmann). Time is of interest mainly in its social and therefore its structural as well as interactional dimensions (see Bergmann; Nowotny; Bormann). Social time has to be adjusted intersubjectively too (cf. Schutz; Luckmann 153). Within this adjustment, different forms of time become effective: clock time is decontextualized, and abstract social time or body time – a form of natural time – is often dichotomously opposed to social time. Yet, their complex interconnections are not thematized. Temporal structuring is a requirement in order to make sense of experiences. The complexity of such different forms of time (cf. Adam 1995, 2006) is often simplified and reduced to two antagonistic ones: inner time and social time.[14]

The subjective sense of time is extended during a traumatizing experience, which sustains the illusion that one would have had more time to act (Fischer 2008: 70). Within a split-second one's whole life passes before one's eyes (13). This is connected with the feeling of being close to death, thus a break with body time. In connection with an expected traumatizing experience, (13) the responsibility for what is happening is accepted and attributed to one's own inability to act. This is accompanied by devaluation and condemnation. Consequently and typically, the persons concerned develop a pathological experience of time. As Michael Theunissen shows, traumatizing experiences lead to a deformation of the everyday experience of time. Following Theunissen's analysis of pathological deformations of time, the experience of such deformations leads to a "dominance of linear time" (224), i. e. a reintegration of linear time into the dimensional order of time fails. On the one hand, being "at the mercy of the linear order of time" can, be described as "disempowerment of the individual," as a disempowerment of her or his subjective experience of time, and, on the other hand, as "empowerment" of the "objectivity of time" (224). In order to illustrate this phenomenon Theunissen refers to people who feel as if they were living in a "freezed present" (259), or as if they were living under a need for compulsive repetition (see also Gusich).

Permanent dissociation results in the loss of a steady sense of time, as the adoption of different personalities can lead to temporal 'blackouts'. But the subjective flow of experiences of traumatized people is broken even without a dissociative identity disorder: The past overrides the present and arrests future perspectives. The biography, which is usually perceived as continuous, is broken. Interaction can become more difficult by such a stigmatized disruption of one's own biography, (see Goffman 1963) as, for instance, the expectation of an uninterrupted, more or less linear biography in the working world suggests. For traumatized people, subjective time and the time valid in everyday life do not match anymore. The "synchronization of the inner time of the actors" (Luckmann 156) with common social time, which is necessary for social interaction, does not exist anymore. "Trauma," Stolorow summarizes,

> devastatingly disrupts the ordinary, average-everyday linearity of temporality, the sense of stretching-along from the past to an open future. … In the region of trauma, all duration or stretching along collapses, the traumatic past becomes present, and future loses all meaning other than endless repetition. Because trauma so profoundly modifies the universal or shared structure of temporality, … the traumatized person quite literally lives in another kind of reality, an experiential world felt to be incommensurable with those of others. (2016: 309 f.)

2.3 Shattered Self-Awareness and the Perception of Others

An intersubjectively reasonable individual who shares common perceptions, and thus functions in structures of mutuality or reciprocity, is essential for any successful interaction. Such a perception implies a certain reliability of the natural and social environment: things, forms of interaction and events are perceived as relatively stable and predictable structures. The feeling of being able to integrate one's own experiences into one's biography in a reliable way because they are somewhat expectable, as well as a feeling of basic order in one's own life and stable emotions are what Laing describes as "ontological security" (1960; see also Giddens).

The traumatizing experience constitutes a rigorous loss of control. The individuals concerned have to deal with the unexpected, which, at the same time, they can only explain to themselves as expectable, attributing it to their own alleged naiveté and mental incapacity. The doubt about one's own perception is combined with the discovery that the social environment has lost its reliability. Objects, forms of interaction, and events are not perceived as relatively stable or expectable structures anymore. The "ontological security" is harmed or destroyed. This can often lead to a domino effect: for instance, when places that were formerly considered safe are avoided, or, in severe cases, a rushed termination of one's lease contract leads to homelessness which then again exacerbates one's "ontological security." A traumatic

experience is often connected with closeness to death. The search for the meaning of the traumatic experience remains unsuccessful. Neither in a subjectively nor intersubjectively reasonable way can any meaning be attributed to the experience. Or the quest for meaning leads to alterations of one's perception in ways where, for example, the world view of the offender is adopted. In the case of severe traumatizations, the meaning of life as such, and thereby the meaning of one's own behaviour, is questioned.

The traumatizing experience itself is characterized by a total loss of ontological security. Traumatized people describe symptoms of "complete absorption and entrapment in the situation, of de-personalization … and de-realization." (Fischer and Riedesser 80). The perception of space and time is altered (see 2.1 and 2.2).

Huber describes the typical consequences of traumatic stress as mental disturbance, no more feeling, no more perceiving, no more sensing, no more knowing (see 68). In addition, the schemes of processing perceptions are structurally shattered (cf. Fischer and Riedesser 80). The dissociation from the experienced constitutes a key phenomenon – in the form of dissociation during the traumatizing experience and as dissociation from the experience in the course of one's further life. For many traumatized people, dissociation is the only way to survive (see van der Kolk. "The Complexity of Adaptation to Trauma"; Deistler and Vogler; Fiedler). This is accompanied by a shattered body-awareness: The body, which is supposed to anchor us in the present, is and remains a stranger.

Not only is self-perception shattered, which is accompanied by a loss of trust in one's own abilities, but also the perception of others. The perception of space, time, and situations is, at least, disrupted. The inability to balance closeness and distance often leads trauma survivors to an avoidance of social relationships. "The distancing from the directness of ones own experiences," Thomas Luckmann argues, is, however, based "on the attention paid to others and the ability to estimate the reflection of one's own actions in the actions of others" (143).

2.4 Shattered Memory: The Constitution of Trauma Memory

"'Remembering,'" Darius Zifonun argues, is to be "understood as the operation in which an individual makes sense of a past experience by drawing on institutionalized, social knowledge" (205). Therefore biographical memory is characterized as "the overall pattern of one's personal history, compounded retrospectively as a reliable context of meaning" (Fischer 239).

Trauma memory, in contrast, is characterized by temporal disruptions, inconsistencies and missing contexts of meaning (cf. Sack 28–31; van der Kolk. "Trauma and Memory;" Teegen 69; Weilnböck). A shattered perception of situations, time, and space (see 2.1 and 2.2) dislocates memories. While a biographical memory is

explicit through symbols and can be adapted according to the social situation or the respective audience, a trauma memory seems to refer to unchangeable emotional and physical states which oftentimes manifest themselves in the form of flashbacks, i. e. "visual pictures, olfactoric, auditive, or kinaesthetic sensations" (van der Kolk. "Trauma and Memory": 229).[15] At the same time, people suffering from a trauma describe experiences of forgetting as crucial occurrences (cf. Fischer and Riedesser 80). Thereby, forgetting and remembering are not to be understood as contradictions, but as referring to each other dialectically. In coping with a trauma, there are also stages in which memories that used to be accessible are forgotten again (see Lennertz; Herman).

As long as the traumatizing experience is not (yet) integrated into the biographical memory, connected sensations may trigger unconscious social actions, as for instance the avoidance of specific places described above, indicates (see 2.1). At the same time, the act of remembering a traumatizing experience exposes the persons concerned to a new, profound form of vulnerability.

> Persons who suffer from a trauma primarily describe … symptoms of complete absorption and captivation in the situation, de-personalization (to be beside oneself) and de-realization (this is not reality, delusion, just a dream) as well as amnesic experiences of forgetting crucial incidents. Our schemata of sensory processing are apparently structurally altered or suspended by traumatic experiences. … The escape movement in perception also manifests itself in several other phenomena, like floating above things, stepping out of one's own body, being an outside observer, or dreaming instead of living reality. (Fischer and Riedesser 80)

For many, distancing oneself from the traumatizing experience is the only way to survive. This means dissociation from oneself, as it is for example known in long-term dissociations. It leads to the development of multiple personalities. For this reason, the articulations of traumatic memories often seem fragmentary, disconnected, contradictory, incoherent – a factor which causes additional problems for traumatized persons as their accounts and descriptions are often not considered credible.[16]

As a basic principle, traumatizing experiences can only be remembered to a limited extent. Remembering and becoming aware of a *traumatic* experience are first steps towards transforming a trauma memory into a biographic memory again. Therapeutic help is usually needed for this process. It puts the respective individual again into a state of profound vulnerability. This applies to victims and perpetrators alike.

2.5 The Inability to Communicate: Speechlessness – Or: On the Dialectic of Worlds and Words of Trauma

Verbal communication is a fundamental form of social interaction. Language makes the categorization of experiences possible: It allows for an integration of the latter into contexts of meaning, but also for a sharing of experiences with others. In this way, burdening experiences can be more easily dealt with. Communication is interaction – someone speaks and somebody else listens. Thus, the inability to communicate cannot be solely attributed to the traumatized individual. There is always a social environment, which allows for, enables, supports or impedes speaking of a traumatic experience. If the communication of a traumatic experience is hindered, this can have the structural form of social norms which come along with shame and/or guilt, and on the level of direct interaction there might be no empathetic listeners.

Psychological studies as well as philosophical debates about the phenomenon of pain seem to indicate that traumatizing experiences entail more than a metaphorical speechlessness and inability to communicate (see van der Kolk. "The Complexity of Adaptation to Trauma": 193; Larrabee, Weine and Woollcott). For the person concerned, so the argument, pain is the "most plausible indicator for what it means to have certainty;" for the one who hears of the pain it is a "prime example for doubting" (Scarry 4, 7, 13). Doubt arises because both pain and trauma are difficult to communicate since they are so deeply inscribed into the living being. Thus it comes with no surprise that in comparison to collecting oral or written testimonies of terrifying events the accounts of individual traumatic experiences are much rarer. The inability to find words for the traumatizing experience or to find empathetic listeners can both lead to a failure of the semantic memory which again, as van der Kolk referring to Piaget stated, "leads to the organization of the memory on a somatosensory or iconic level" ("Trauma and Memory": 288). Eventually, the inability to communicate the traumatizing experience might result in a complete silencing.

In general, these five dimensions of shattered spatial experience, shattered experience of time, shattered self-awareness and perception of others, shattered memory in the sense of a trauma memory and, finally, speechlessness with regard to the traumatizing experience, are introduced here to formulate the core of a phenomenologically based sociology of trauma.

3. An Empirical Case Example

Experiences always need to be integrated into one's own biography, i. e. into the life the agent wants to live (in whatever form). This structural assumption implies that experiences, and specifically cardinal experiences, which are a kind of trauma, cannot be forgotten, but they have to be integrated into one's own identity and biogra-

phy – be it factually, temporally, or socially. The empirical example I am introducing in order to support the foregoing analysis of the five dimensions for a sociological approach to trauma is taken from the field of so-called political activism. Within the broader field of "Activist Trauma Support" several groups collaborate "to create a reader about trauma and resilience that matters to people." They "understand trauma as experiences so threatening that [one] felt a profound sense of powerlessness and loss of control." Within this network they founded a project called "Scarsongs:" "Scarsongs is a project that aims to bring more grassroots approaches into the conversation around trauma, resilience and mutual support." A project, which aims "to create a meaningful document and a vital resource." One of the sources included here is a statement submitted on March 17, 2010 under the title "10 Good Reasons Why Trauma Matters in 'Political Activism'" (activist-trauma.net).

This general statement is supplemented by some "personal accounts" in order to document its relevance. One of these documents is called "Total Eclipse." It starts with the following characterization:

> I don't know what is happening to me. The world around me collapsed. I have lost it. This will never be over. It will always stay like this. I will never be able to dance again. I will never be happy again. I will never love again. I will never laugh again. My world is pain and tears. My world is loneliness. My world is a black tower in a dark sea. My life is gone. Is this life still worth living? (activist-trauma.net)

To be more explicit at this point, I will highlight the important aspects for my analysis. These are: I will never be able to *dance* again. I will never be *happy* again. I will never *love* again. I will never *laugh* again. – My world is *pain* and tears. My world is *loneliness*. My world is a *black tower* in a dark sea. My life is *gone*.

We can identify two lines of narrative structure here. The first one is a temporal one, contrasting past and present experiences. It reads as follows: the past, i. e., the time before the traumatizing experience, is characterized by the phenomena of dancing – happiness – loving – laughing. The present, i. e. the time after the traumatizing experience, is characterized by pain – loneliness – the black tower metaphor – life is gone. The overall temporal structure of this narrative is reinforced by other aspects which are addressed via the keywords of this passage and their reference to the aforementioned dimensions of trauma analysis. Here dance and pain refer to the spatial and to the communicative dimension as both are ways of expressing oneself. Happiness and loneliness refer to the social dimension, love and the metaphor of the 'black tower in a dark sea' to both the social as well as the spatial (corporeal) dimension, while the verbs laughing and going again refer to the expressive or communicative dimension. Finally, temporality is the overall frame of this narrative, describing a move from one state to the other. In this way, it serves to articulate a memory of the past.

The characterization of this "personal account" contrasts past and present, thus impressively and emphatically expressing the inversion traumatic experiences cause, which I describe in the second part of this paper. As an empirical case it is included here for illustrative purposes. Neither does it claim to present a phenomenological reduction, nor does it provide a systematic account of a sociological analysis of trauma. It is included in the present analysis to demonstrate the fruitfulness of a phenomenologically based sociological analysis of the problem at hand, illustrating the transformation, i. e. the inversion of the structures of everyday experiences within the realm of traumatic experience.

Concluding Remarks: Trauma – A State of Multiple Incommensurability

> Trauma shatters the illusions of everyday life that evade and cover up the finitude, contingency, and embeddedness of our existence and the indefiniteness of its certain extinction. … A traumatized person … lives in another kind of reality, an experiential world felt to be incommensurable with those of others. (Stolorow 2016: 309, 310; cf. also Weilnböck)

At the beginning of my argument violence was conceived as a negation of sociality. As an impairment of personal integrity, violence is closely linked to basic (operating) trust, or to be more precise, to the shattering of basic trust. Because the mode of basic (operating) trust can only be analyzed *ex negativo*, I focussed my analysis on traumatizing/traumatic experiences induced by interpersonal violence that shatters basic (operating) trust. The integration of the traumatizing and traumatic experience into one's biography is a fundamental aspect of recovery from trauma – recovery being understood as the recovery of basic (operating) trust.

By listing the aforementioned five implications – shattered experiences of space, time, self-awareness and perception of others, memory, and communicative ability – I intended to sketch a heuristics which, however, needs to be supported by empirical research. To some extent this might be achieved by reconsidering already available psychological studies sociologically, i. e. in combination with sociological empirical studies. My concern was to show that a differentiation of modes of trust – with a focus on basic (operating) trust – has *shattered trust* emerge as the key phenomenon in connection with traumatic experiences. In my view, such an understanding of *shattered trust* is essential for a formulation of a heuristics for a systematic sociological research on trauma.

Notes

1 The term (psycho-)trauma is usually not reduced to interpersonal violence. Nevertheless, within psychological trauma research one finds the critique that meanwhile trauma serves as a catch-all term that in the end equates the experience of a car accident with those of a gang rape or torture, experiences of an earthquake with those of war (cf. Ehrenreich; Lennertz). Moreover, the inflationary use of the term not only in everyday language, but also in academic discourse, is widely criticized (see Weilnböck).

2 Such a shattering at least in its aggravation, in situations of pure terror, points to the connection between violence and trauma on both sides: on the side of the offenders (for instance child soldiers, Vietnam soldiers) as well as on the side of their victims (e. g. concentration camp detainees) (see also Waldenfels 21).

3 The term 'recoverability' is (for now) put in quotation marks in order to clarify that the intent is neither to completely delete the traumatizing experiences, nor to completely 'heal' the operating trust harmed through trauma. The task is always the integration of the experience into one's own relationship to oneself, the world and to society. And because of this task of integration, the threefold relationship expressed through the concept of operating trust cannot be comprehended as being identical before and after a traumatizing experience. Therefore, the term 'recoverability' can only be used in a figurative sense in this context – as indicated on the textual layer through the use of quotation marks.

4 Both aspects have to be first seen in their socio-cultural and socio-historical variance and second as related to societal legitimized formations of this relation.

5 The German original reads as follows: "Wir [sind] immerzu fungierend als Akt-Subjekte, aber nur gelegentlich thematisch gegenständlich."

6 See Psathas 12 f. on "the impossibility of full explication."

7 This description as "necessarily concomitant" (in German: "notwendig damit einhergehend, begleitet werdend") can be compared with Kant's notion of transcendental apperception in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant writes: "Das: Ich denke, muss alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können." (§ 16, B 132).

8 See in this context also Endress and Pabst.

9 In order to grasp the exceptionality of the Holocaust for instance, trauma researchers implemented the expression 'extreme trauma' (cf. Bettelheim).

10 This was commented upon by Eissler: "The murder of how many of one's children one has to stand symptom free to be considered having a normal constitution?"

11 This is also related to the fact that one finds similarities in symptoms of trauma as, e. g., listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) by the American Psychiatric Association.

12 Implications of traumatizing experiences are manifold and they are discussed controversially. There are diverse efforts to catalogue post-traumatic symptoms, as, for instance, in the respective passages in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) published by the American Psychiatric Association, or in the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (ICD) by the World Health Organization. Moreover, there is presumably an amount of critique and many additions of other possible symptoms (see Herman).

13 The psychoanalysts Khan and Keilson have pointed to the significance of "cumulative trauma" and "sequential trauma" respectively.
14 See Luckmann's differentiation between three levels of time: inner, social, and historical time.
15 For a critical commentary on van der Kolk's research about trauma memory and its reception, see Lennertz 13 f.
16 In addition, this perspective implies methodological problems as well. Judging a memory as "fragmented" seems to be arguing with a normative idea of memory and its 'normal' form of organization. Nonetheless, the problem here is to find descriptions of a state of shatteredness. Moreover, I am not talking about 'false' memory, because there would be a position identifiable to articulate this judgement. One may call this memory unreliable, but not 'false,' because we have to be aware of its structurally analogous mode of construction.

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Trauma, War, and Diplomacy: An Exploration

James Fergusson

Introduction

Except for the study of the effect of combat related trauma on individual soldiers and civilians, the concept is noticeable by its absence in the scholarly literature on war and diplomacy. Trauma is neither an organizing nor explanatory concept in these fields of study. Yet, there is no shortage of events in international politics over the last century that can be conceptualized as traumatic in terms of their effect on national and international behavior. In effect, trauma may not just be a useful concept to understand individual behavior, but also useful to understand national behavior concerning decisions to apply force (war) and in the conduct of national diplomacy.

There are, of course, several potential explanations for the failure to apply the concept of trauma in the study of war and diplomacy. On the surface at least, these relate directly to the origin of the concept within the disciplines of psychiatry and psychology, with their primary focus on the individual. War and diplomacy, in contrast, are embedded within the study of international politics, with its primary focus upon the state. To this end, the concept possesses a significant level of analysis problem for understanding war and diplomacy, and represents a case of reification. States are not individuals, driven by emotions.

In addition, trauma related to violence is conceptualized as a casual agent for dysfunctional behavior, whereas violence at the international level, war, is largely, albeit not exclusively, conceptualized as 'normal' behavior for states in an environment of international anarchy, as legally embedded in the right of self and collective defence in Article 51 of the United Nation's Charter. This also raises the difficult question of identifying, or categorizing dysfunctional national behavior in the realm of war and diplomacy.

Finally, psychiatry and psychology seek to identify the means to cure the individual of dysfunctional behavior caused by trauma. If dysfunctional national behavior can be identified, arguably some cure may be possible. But who the agent of a cure may be is very complicated when dealing with national societies and their governments, beyond perhaps the basic idea that a cure depends upon the actor recognizing that a trauma exists, and linking it to certain behavior.

Nonetheless, the concept of trauma applied to the study of war and diplomacy may provide a useful alternative or additional means to understand the evolution of international politics over the last century. In exploring this possibility, the first step is to examine the theoretical status of the key concepts of war and diplomacy

as related to trauma. Subsequently, it is useful to examine a few cases to explore the possible link between trauma and national behavior.

Trauma, War, and Diplomacy

The obvious link between trauma and war is violence, both in terms of the threat, and application, and the experiencing and witnessing of violence. The dominant outcome, at least in terms of the impact of war on behavior at the individual level is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). If individuals as a result of such an experience acquire PTSD, and PTSD produces a relatively predictable set of dysfunctional behavior, can nations or states also suffer similar results? In other words, can a nation as a group, or its decision-makers as representatives of the group, suffer from PTSD? If so, is there a predictable set of dysfunctional national behavior that results, and, if so, can nations be cured of PTSD as individuals can?

In seeking to explore answers to these questions, the logical first link is the treatment of war as the causal agent. As for individuals experiencing war, nations or societies collectively experience war. This is especially the case with the emergence of total war in the 20th century, where nations mobilized all elements of society in its prosecution. In this sense, every element of society was engaged in, exposed to, and experienced war.

This, then suggests, that only total wars entailing the full mobilization of national societies by government are trauma candidates. But, this does not necessarily mean that all nations engaged in a total war, such as World War I and World War II, experience trauma. In addition, other types of war, such as limited, small or insurgency wars, which are a much more common feature of international politics, may possess all the hallmarks of total war for one of the participants, but not the other. For example, the United States did not mobilize its society to prosecute the war in Vietnam, but its direct opponent, North Vietnam, did. Ironically, as discussed below, the United States, rather than North Vietnam, is a much better trauma candidate. Analogous to the recognition that not all individuals experiencing war suffer trauma and PTSD, so not all nations experiencing the same war are candidates for a trauma explanation.

If war, in either of the two cases above, is the cause of national trauma, then some type of dysfunctional behavior should result, as distinguishable from normal national behavior in the international realm. The answer partially may be found in the relationship between national objectives and national options. If the trauma from war generates a myopic lens through which national society and government perceive the behavior of other states, a form of national 'groupthink', thereby determining the policy response without a rational search for alternative options, then one may suggest that this determination is a product of a national PTSD.[1] Curing

this PTSD, in turn, requires society and/or its decision-makers to recognize that option identification and analysis is not being undertaken on a rational cost-benefit basis relative to identifiable objectives, but is a product of trauma and thus irrational. In this sense, this treatment provides an alternative, or additional way to understand and explain national decision-making.[2]

Of course, one never knows whether a foreclosed option, if recognized and applied would have produced a different, more functional outcome: a longstanding conceptual problem in decision-making studies.

Trauma, and PTSD in terms of dysfunctional individual behavior is largely linked to self-destructive behavior, such as suicide. In international politics, a central axiom related to state behavior is to survive. Thus, a national PTSD may drive a state into behavior that will, or could lead to its demise, and the primary path to self-destruction is war. War is thus both a causal agent for trauma, and a dysfunctional dependent variable. It may lead a state into diplomatic behavior that drives a nation to another war where its survival may be at stake, or to take steps in an attempt to avoid war, which, ironically results in war.

An illustrative example is the 1870–1871 Franco-Prussian War. France's disastrous defeat has all the hallmarks of a national trauma. The humiliation of the French Army, the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, and German reparation demands generated a fissure in the European state system, which would not be resolved (cured ironically by war) until the conclusion of World War II.[3] No matter the issue in European politics, any positive relationship between France and Germany was foreclosed as an option. No French government could entertain anything but opposition to Germany. This fissure, in turn, set the stage for World War I, and subsequently World War II, in which France faced potential and then actual destruction. Even Germany, although not directly traumatized due to its victory, recognized the French trauma *per se*, which put its policy makers along a path based upon permanent French enmity.[4]

Naturally, there are other factors, such as the rise of nationalism and German power, which explain the policies adopted by the major powers, including Germany, which set Europe on the path to World War I and II. But, arguably, it was the trauma of the French defeat which was key to the inevitability of a future war for survival.

In the above case, national trauma becomes in effect a systemic force, as a function of the resultant bi-furcation of the system into two hostile camps. The dysfunctional behavior led to the end of flexible, issue based alliance or coalition behavior and its replacement by a rigid permanent adversarial bipolar alliance system. This ensured that when the spark occurred, all the powers would become engaged on one side or the other in a total war.

This example also suggests that war has a dual status. It is both the causal agent of national trauma, and the ultimate self-destructive behavioral outcome of a national PTSD. In this sense, this theoretical perspective also has a significant ideological component. It represents a liberal treatment of war as 'evil' and itself 'abnormal'

behavior, rather than the traditional view of war as 'normal' behavior at the international level. But as theorized above, not all wars produce national traumas for any or all of the participants in war. Thus, in order to ensure that the trauma-war relationship is a meaningful one, it is useful to examine two cases as perhaps possible candidates for trauma explanation.

Trauma and the Great War

The Great War, or World War I, arguably, presents the best case for systemic and national trauma. From the early post-war to the contemporary era, the "war to end all wars" has clearly been portrayed in traumatic terms. The slaughter on the Western Front, the horrific conditions in the trenches, and the suffering of civilian society as a function of national mobilization suggests that every individual, and thus the collective as a whole, had direct experience with an event that has all the hallmarks of trauma. This, in turn, was communicated through subsequent generations, not least of all evident by its memorialization in a variety of different ways. Most striking here, perhaps, is the re-naming of Armistice Day (November 11) to Remembrance Day, at least in the United Kingdom and its dominions, and the phrase "we will never forget."

No nation was unaffected by the war. Empires fell, and revolutions occurred. Even states which emerged after the war were deeply affected, and the effects of the war continue to reverberate today in a variety of different ways.[5] Of course, major wars always have a significant impact, not least of all because they are about the fundamental nature of the system and the rules, norms and principles, which come to govern it. Thus, for example, the new post-war principle of national self-determination, unequally applied by the Powers at Versailles, set in motion a range of future violent results leading to the death of empires, and the process of de-colonization. Not all of these results are necessarily traumatic *per se*, and certainly not necessarily traumatic for all societies engaged over time. For trauma to result, it must be related to a significant change in national attitudes and beliefs, which in turn, spawns dysfunctional behavior.

Certainly in the case of Great Britain, World War I is seen by many as producing a fundamental change in national social attitudes and beliefs with regard to war. Neither prepared for, nor having experienced war on this level, in contrast to the continental powers, British society's attitude towards war shifted 180 degrees. Prior to the Great War, British society, accustomed to limited colonial warfare, largely perceived war in terms of glory and the export of civilization and order to the world beyond Europe. After the war, it became evident that there was no glory in the mud of western Europe. Simply, societal attitudes towards war and the use of force shifted from positive to negative. At best, war might be a necessary evil, but increasingly

became seen as abnormal behavior. This impact is illustrated in the famous 1933 Oxford debate, where the student body overwhelmingly rejected going to war for King and country (see Ceadel).

The traumatic impact of the nature of the Great War, in turn, was reinforced by the outcome. Despite being a victor, what really had Great Britain won? Reflected in the myth of the 'lost generation', the flower of future leadership lay dead in the mud of the Somme and Flanders (cf. Corrigon). Great Britain had become a debtor nation. There had been no real major gains from the war. Even territory acquired, such as in Palestine and the Middle East, would become a greater problem than they were worth. The Empire and imperial ethos lay shattered.

The trauma of World War I in the case of Great Britain is also evident in its encapsulation by a single event or battle – the Somme in 1916. While the battle lasted for roughly four months, it, in turn, is encapsulated by the opening day, July 1, when Great Britain suffered approximately 60,000 casualties. Even though in proportional terms, British casualties are comparable, for example, to the Battle of Waterloo a hundred years earlier, the Somme remains seared in British memory as disaster for the gain of hundreds of yards at best.[6]

Of course, trauma requires the production of dysfunctional behavior. In the case of subsequent British behavior, a simple linear argument can be made that links the traumatic effect of the Great War to World War II, and is encapsulated in the diplomatic concept of appeasement. In seeking to avoid a repeat of the Great War, especially in relation to new social attitudes about war, which raised questions about the willingness of British society to support the use of force in another continental war, British governments, a product of British society, were unable to recognize and understand the reality of Nazi Germany and Hitler's ambitions.

The objective of British diplomacy, reinforced by the French, was to avoid war at all costs. Like the individual who has nightmares of his/her war experience, leading to a range of dysfunctional behaviors, so the nightmare of the Western Front led to behavior that in the end did not prevent war, but made it inevitable. Both British and French political and military elites believed another continental war with Germany would simply be a repeat of World War I, and thus to be avoided. Hitler's demands to reverse the outcome of World War I were accepted as legitimate. The Versailles Treaty came to be seen as illegitimate, which required revision, not least of all on the grounds of national self-determination. Hitler became normalized. Appease his legitimate demands, as most clearly evident at Munich in 1938, Germany will become satisfied, and peace will be assured.

Of course, there are other important considerations that can be related to the policy of appeasement. The objective of making Germany a bulwark against Soviet Russia, and the buying of time for British rearmament, amongst others.[7] In addition, there were voices in Great Britain, such as Churchill, who warned of the threat of Nazi Germany and opposed appeasement. But, these were voices largely in the

political wilderness, as society and government in an unconscious sense sought to avoid another war, and, in so doing, arguably made war inevitable. With hindsight, the option of threatening war to deter Nazi Germany was foreclosed by the trauma of the Great War and the Somme. When war came in September 1939, there was no glorious march to the colors by the British or French publics, as had occurred in August 1914.

The outcome of the trauma of Munich – the Munich syndrome – was the lesson never to appease dictators because it feeds their appetite for aggression. This became the primary, if not exclusive policy posture of Western liberal democracies in general, and the United States in particular throughout most of the Cold War. From the Soviet Union to Communist China, appeasement was rejected as a viable option, and replaced by one policy option under American leadership – contain the international communist movement through the practice of deterrence.

This was the underpinning of the American national and political bipartisan consensus, extended to its allies and client states. Even when the US deviated somewhat from this option, as evident in the Nixon-Kissinger era of détente with the Soviet Union, the outcome of that era would quickly become another case of Munich.[8] Indeed, American policy remains unconsciously dominated by the Munich Syndrome, even most recently in the US policy response to Russia over Crimea and Ukraine. To recognize to any extent legitimate Russian security interests was equivalent to appeasement, which would simply feed future Russian (Putin) aggression.

Of course, this is not to suggest that a deterrence option is necessarily and always dysfunctional. One might readily suggest that the option was key to the ultimate victory of the West in the Cold War in the absence of a major war. But, the important theoretical point in terms of trauma, and the uncertainty of international politics, is the extent to which alternatives to deterrence are foreclosed, and implicitly viewed as dysfunctional, as the result of the Munich Syndrome. Embedded within this was also the tendency to view every dictator, from Nasser to Saddam Hussein, as another Hitler.

In contrast to Great Britain, the United States and Germany offer different insights into the complicated issues surrounding a trauma explanation. While 'traumatized' by Munich, the United States was not traumatized by World War I. A late entrant into the war, and despite high casualties as a function of lack of experience with trench warfare, there was no traumatic effect *per se*, if trauma is related to attitudinal and behavioral change. At best, its war experience simply reinforced existing societal attitudes towards war and engagement with Europe, evident in its return to isolationism. If neither the nature, nor outcome of the war caused any significant change in American social attitudes, as it did in Great Britain, then arguably it was not a traumatic event.

Of course, with hindsight, US isolationism became an important factor in the drift to war in 1939, and as such one might suggest some form of trauma at play in

failing to adopt policies in which political-military engagement might have reversed the outcome. Nonetheless, if trauma is to have explanatory value, then one would expect to see a clear change in national attitudes and behavior, as was the case with Great Britain.

Germany is a more complicated case. It experienced the slaughter on the Western Front, but society's response was in the opposite direction. Certainly, elements of German society experienced the same revulsion to war, as evident in Erich Maria Remarque's classic anti-war novel *Im Westen nichts Neues* [*All Quiet on the Western Front*; 1929]. Compounded by defeat, loss of empire and territory, and internal upheavals, the result was not a rejection of war, but a desire for reversing the outcome, and with it, the nature of war, as discussed below. Germany would gradually become a militarized society, in which the glory of war was to be celebrated, at least within the ranks of the Nazi party, and given its widespread popularity, extended or reflected in German society.

From a western liberal perspective, the trauma of World War I drove Germany down the path to self-destruction, reinforced by the 'stab in the back' myth. A national social consensus emerged to revise its outcome, which was manipulated by Hitler and the Nazis in coming to power. But, there was nothing *per se* as a function of defeat in 1918, which necessarily dictated that the revision of 1918 demanded another total war. Certainly, World War I had a direct traumatic impact on Hitler, who fought on the Western Front, and others as a function of their 'positive' experiences in war of comradeship, and the exhilaration of combat.[9] Even so, different leadership might have produced a successful revision, without resort to war, as evident for example, in the policies adopted by the Stresemann government in the 1920s.

Regardless, if one takes the case of Germany and World War I, explaining World War II as a function of World War I in terms of trauma raises the question of behavioral change. Simply, it rests upon the debate as to whether the Nazi regime, relative to German society, was a break with, or a continuation of the past. If the latter, then the Great War is questionable as a traumatic event, altering subsequent behavior. In this sense, post-Great War behavior was the product of pre-war behavior, and thus in a sense normal for Germany *per se*.[10]

Trauma and the United States

The Munich Syndrome as a form of national PTSD was arguably most pronounced in the United States during the Cold War, and beyond, not least of all because the United States was the dominant power and political leader of the West in the struggle against international communism, as led by the Soviet Union. There is no shortage of explanations for the resultant Cold War, which fall into the realm of normal national and international behavior. However, the Munich Syndrome as a symbol

for the failure of the West to deter Hitler has elements of dysfunctional behavior. In all circumstances the Soviet Union had to be confronted, and not appeased – the latter being understood as an expectation of normal behavior depending on the specific circumstances in relations between competing Great Powers. It also generated a Western image of international communism as monolithic, resulting in the failure of American decision-makers to recognize early on significant cleavages within the communist movement, especially between the Soviet Union and Communist China. It also led American decision-makers to perceive all revolutionary movements on the periphery as under the direction of Moscow, rather than as part of the anti-colonial struggle for national independence.

If, as noted above, the Nixon-Kissinger policy towards the Soviet Union, and the rapprochement with China during the era of détente is seen as the normalization of relations, then one might suggest that the syndrome in a national sense was cured. A degree of flexibility, rather than Cold War rigidity, was restored to US diplomacy. Munich was put to rest or at least pushed into the shadows, at least until the 1980s.

As part of this Cold War national PTSD, the Vietnam War offers another potential case.[11] Vietnam destroyed the post-World War II bipartisan consensus on American foreign and defence policy. It tore the nation apart, evident in the massive demonstrations across the United States that began approximately in 1966 at the time the Johnson administration significantly expanded the American military commitment. It produced a major shift in American thinking about war, especially in relation to American 'boys' dying in a far-away location for a regime anti-ethical to American liberal democratic values and principles. This, in turn, was reinforced by the behavior of American troops in the field, especially following the My Lai massacre of civilians (see Oliver).

Certainly in the wake of Vietnam, American society and government recoiled from direct intervention in wars on the periphery, which ceded the advantage to the Soviet Union.[12] In addition, the Nixon administration ended conscription in part as a function of the unequal burden and costs that fell upon the disadvantaged of American society, especially the African-American community, regardless of its potential negative impact on the balance of military power with the Soviet Union. Carter followed with a significant shift in American policy on the periphery, including a prohibition on military support to certain Latin American governments.

However, the trauma of Vietnam appears to have had a relatively short life. In some senses, Americans were cured of this trauma. While the idea of the Vietnam Syndrome continues to resonate to this day – a war on the periphery anti-ethical to US values and principles threatening to tear US society apart – in reality it had no long term significant impact. From the Gulf War (1991), Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003) to ISIS today, the Vietnam Syndrome, despite repeated reference in the media, has become irrelevant.

If one considers the traumatic impact of Vietnam to have been cured, explaining the cure becomes an interesting question. Returning to its psychological roots, the cure is a function of the recognition on the part of the individual of the disorder, and the intervention of an outside actor – a psychologist – who administers solutions to the disorder. Certainly, the American leadership recognized that the Vietnam Syndrome was a major obstacle in terms of the United States prosecuting the Cold War. As for the outside actor, ironically, the Soviet Union is the key unintentional psychologist. Its actions from Africa to Afghanistan provided the means for the United States to overcome Vietnam. In addition, Ronald Reagan's call to make the U.S. great again, accompanied by a large military modernization program set the stage for the United States to take the offensive, diplomatically and militarily, especially on the periphery. Ironically, the Vietnam cure led to the unconscious re-assertion of the Munich trauma. Détente was simply appeasement by another name.

Alongside Munich and Vietnam, American cold war behavior was also directly affected by the trauma of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. In one sense, it simply reinforced the Munich Syndrome in American diplomacy during the Cold War and beyond in the American failure to enter the war earlier, and elevated the United States' willingness to intervene through the use of force overseas as a dominant option. In another, it generated a national political and strategic obsession with future surprise attacks.

Certainly, nuclear weapons and long-range delivery systems, especially with the development of inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBM), with a flight time of approximately thirty minutes from launch in the Soviet Union to American targets, made the possibility of a devastating surprise attack real. But, the American obsession, which underpinned its strategic deterrence posture, with surprise attack, in contrast to the Soviet Union and later on China, was relatively unique, arguably as a function of Pearl Harbor. The strategic discourse on first and second (retaliatory) strike requirements, counterforce and counter-value targeting, and strategic stability can be seen as a function of the fear of surprise attack.[13] This fear, in turn, provides an alternative or reinforcing explanation for the high levels of strategic nuclear forces acquired by the United States, and the blanket rejection of other strategic options at lower levels of nuclear forces.

Of course, one can explain the American technologically driven obsession regarding nuclear weapons as simply the product of the technology-based, problem-solving nature of American culture.[14] At best, possibly, Pearl Harbor simply reinforced beliefs deeply held in American society, and at worst was irrelevant for explaining American strategic behavior. In addition, whether this should be treated as dysfunctional is difficult to answer. In part, it depends upon whether one views the American strategic deterrent posture as the key explanation for the absence of a major war during the Cold War, rather than alternative explanations for a non-event. If the strategic posture is the key explanation for peace, then it is not truly dysfunc-

tional. If, instead, for example, peace during the Cold War was largely a function of two satisfied dominant powers, who tacitly agree to prosecute their rivalry on the periphery, then one might suggest that the strategic capabilities and posture of the United States has dysfunctional elements.

Alongside Pearl Harbor, 9/11 may be seen as a reinforcing traumatic event, because of their similarities. In both cases, an adversary represented a clear and present danger. Both were a product of a major intelligence failure, with the information of a likely attack present (partially with hindsight), but not put together by intelligence officials. Both led to war. Both resulted in a major re-organization of the American security structure. Both produced dysfunctional behavior contrary to American values and principles, as evident in the internment of Japanese Americans, and the use of torture and confinement at Guantanamo Bay. Both reinforced the American preference to intervene overseas to defeat their adversaries before a direct attack on the American homeland. In the Cold War, this became encapsulated in the domino theory, whereby failure to intervene (Vietnam for example) would eventually lead to the fall of states to communism like dominoes, resulting inevitably in a direct attack on the United States. In the post-9/11 era, this became manifested in the formal adoption of a pre-emptive strike posture, as initially laid out during the Bush administration.

Perhaps most indicative of the 9/11 trauma was the elevation of the Al Qaeda terrorist threat to an existential threat, and an obsessive response encapsulated by the 'war on terror'. While one cannot entirely ignore the threat of terrorism, it is certainly not an existential threat to the United States and the West. Even if one conceives of a terrorist attack employing weapons of mass destruction, the worst-case scenario, it would not destroy the United States. In this sense, elevating terrorism to an existential threat can be seen as dysfunctional, and a direct product of the 9/11 trauma. While the military intervention into Afghanistan can be readily understood as 'normal' behavior, not least of all as a function of a United Nations' legitimizing mandate, other interventions are much more questionable, especially in the case of Iraq in 2003.

In dysfunctional terms, the intervention into Iraq actually served as a catalyst for increased terrorist activity, as did the intervention into Libya (2011). A military response emerged in some ways as the only option for the United States, and its allies, rather than a search for alternative responses to terrorist activity.

9/11 also had a dysfunctional impact on relations with core American allies, such as Canada. The United States initially closed the border with Canada, disrupting massive amounts of trade, and turned the border from the longest undefended to an armed border. Since then, the United States and Canada have slowly sought to walk back through a variety of 'open border' initiatives.

Certainly, the United States had some cause for closing the border, directly as a function of the Ressam case.[15] However, the decision was taken with little, if any,

consideration about its impact. It was 'knee-jerk', albeit understandable in terms of the impact of 9/11 on American society.[16] Alongside this element of a dysfunctional decision, the United States undertook massive re-structuring of its domestic security apparatus, and has spent an enormous amount of money as if it was engaged in a total war.

Conclusion

There is no shortage of additional events or experiences which possess all the hallmarks of trauma for a national society. The conceptual problem, however, primarily resides on the behavioral side of the equation in the uncertain world of diplomacy and decisions regarding the use of force. Differentiating between functional or normal, and dysfunctional or abnormal behavior is extremely complicated.

As another example, it is evident that the holocaust trauma has had a major impact on Israel and Israeli policy regarding the use of force. Its willingness to use force pre-emptively and repeatedly can be directly explained by the holocaust experience. At the same time, however, Israel's geostrategic situation surrounded by states and non-state actors pledged to its destruction, also provides it with little choice but to rely upon the pre-emptive use of force. Israel simply lacks the space to undertake a defence in depth, and absorb an attack.[17] It must go first to survive. In effect, the holocaust (trauma) and geo-strategic reality reinforce each other.

As such, as well as in the cases explored above, the ability to identify traumatic events as a function of war and diplomacy appears not to be too difficult. The difficulty lies in determining when the traumatic event produces dysfunctional behavior, leading states down the path to disaster, especially when the linkage can only be made with hindsight. No one knows if an alternative policy choice would have produced a different or more functional outcome. Moreover, trauma as an explanation is likely only one part of the equation. It may simply reinforce a policy decision driven by other functional geostrategic political considerations.

This, then, suggests the need to explore in much greater detail the potential utility of trauma for understanding decisions regarding the national diplomatic behavior and considerations regarding the use of force. This may be more pressing today, especially with the apparent return of Great Power politics to prominence on the world stage. There is no shortage today of references to a new Cold War, especially between the United States and Russia, not to mention the complexity with the rise of China and India. Whether the Cold War itself should be examined in trauma terms is an open question.

But, if national societies and their governments conclude there is a new Cold War, then those experiences will inform their actions. Perhaps then, the potential utility of a trauma explanation simply resides in Lord Palmerston's famous phrase,

subsequently paraphrased as "Great Britain has no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests."[18] Trauma may make permanent enemies in the minds of national societies and their governments, which, in turn, can lead to the sacrifice of permanent interests.

Notes

1 The classic study of groupthink in foreign policy decision-making is Irving Janis. *Victims of Groupthink*.
2 Among existing explanations of non-rational decision-making are organizational and bureaucratic politics.
3 The resolution would be found in French-German rapprochement with the creation of the European Iron and Steel Community, the forerunner of the European Union today.
4 At the time of the Prussian/German victory, Chancellor Bismarck recognized that seizing Alsace and Lorraine would ensure permanent enmity, and advised against it (see Taylor).
5 The current violence in the Middle East is traced by many to the decisions of the British and the French in carving up the region into new states, with no consideration of ethnic or historical boundaries. This, of course, also applied throughout the colonial world.
6 The traumatic legacy of July 1 is most pronounced in Newfoundland. The Royal Newfoundland Regiment suffered over 90% casualties in less than 30 minutes, and given the small population of Newfoundland, this affected everyone. Whereas Canada celebrates Canada (Dominion) Day on July 1, Newfoundland remembers the Somme.
7 In the wake of World War I, successive British governments adopted the ten year rule, in which Britain would have a ten year warning of a major threat providing time for rearming.
8 The term détente itself refers to the normalization of relations, and as an alternative to containment and deterrence, it was to manage the Soviet Union by treating it as a normal power. Importantly, the policy or era of détente also included the normalization of relations with Communist China.
9 Many memoirs, not only of World War I, speak of this experience and the alienation of returning to a peaceful world as evident in, for example, *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Goodbye to All That* by Robert Graves, both published in 1929.
10 This relates to the debate on German war guilt as embedded in Versailles. For an overview of pre-World War I German political-strategic thought see Craig and Gat.
11 For the Soviet Union, the Afghanistan invasion might be considered as its major trauma.
12 For example, in 1973, Congress passed the War Powers Act, which limited the ability of the President to deploy troops overseas for an extended period of time without Congressional approval. Three years later Congress explicitly forbade the President from providing military aid to the pro-Western UNITA movement in Angola. In the 1980s, Congress also forbade the provision of military support to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua.
13 In its basic Cold War form, strategic stability was the possession of invulnerable second strike retaliatory capabilities with the capacity for the assured destruction of the Soviet Union after absorbing a first strike by the Soviet Union.

14 This has resurfaced again in the context of the state of American-Russian relations (see Schlosser).
15 Ahmed Ressam was an Algerian born member of Al Qaeda, who resided in Canada, and was arrested at the American border in Washington State planning to bomb Los Angeles International Airport.
16 At the time, several American political figures, including Senator Hillary Clinton, erroneously believed that the 9/11 terrorists had come from Canada.
17 When attacked in 1973, the Yom Kippur War, it is generally believed that if Egypt had not purposefully stopped its forces after crossing the Suez Canal, the result could have been disastrous for Israel.
18 The original statement reads as follows: "We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow." (Palmerston)

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Mennomental Issues

Depression and Trauma in Canadian Mennonite(s) Writing

Martin Kuester

Mourning seems to be the traditional mood and the typical form of a "malady of the soul" (cf. Kristeva 9) that we associate with much Mennonite writing, also with Canadian Mennonite writing. The novel whose title comes to one's mind immediately in this context would be Al Reimer's *My Harp is Turned to Mourning* (1985), which draws upon a line from the Book of Job, and in which one of the characters vents his frustration about what the Mennonite settlement in Russia (or rather Ukraine, in today's terms) has come to: "Like Job's, my harp is turned to mourning. Give me release. From memory. From earthly life." (141).

In one of the most important recent monographs on Canadian Mennonite writing, *Rewriting the Break Event: Mennonites and Migration in Canadian Literature* (2013), Robert Zacharias uses the term *break event* as a central metaphor for the Mennonites' general mood. This break event is a historic moment that has gained traumatic importance for this ethnic and/or religious group of immigrants to Canada. It refers back to the time of the pogroms in early 20th century Russia (or rather Ukraine), when the pacifist Mennonite settlers, who had been invited to Russia by Catherine the Great and had become successful and rich farmers, were driven away from their settling grounds by anarchist or communist uprisings. One might see this rebellion against the rich "invaders" also as the reaction of the original rural population who felt exploited by the successful immigrants.

Many Canadian Mennonite writers besides Al Reimer, among them the first and most famous Mennonite novelist in English, Rudy Wiebe, have written narratives that deal with this Mennonite break event in Europe. Robert Zacharias lists, for example, *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (1962), *The Blue Mountains of China* (1970) and *Sweeter Than All the World* (2001) amongst Wiebe's works that deal with the "break event." Another example of such traumatic memories is that of Jakob Abramovich in John Weier's 1995 novel *Steppe*. One example of a journal entry in this unpaginated multivocal text shows how "Onkel Jakob" has to leave his Ukrainian home in Tiegerweide behind:

> And then I sprang. Before their eyes could hold me. I sprang through the window, glass clicking and pistols, and ran. I saw their torches behind me in the night. They never found me. In the daytime I lay in the water, in swamps and ditches. At night I walked. My name, I told those who helped me, is Jakob Abramovich. We were wealthy, everyone knew that

> name. I was always in danger. In '24 I gave them false papers. I took the first train to Canada. (N. p., section 4.22)

The almost teleological or typological connection between the Ukrainian steppe and the Canadian prairies is also highlighted by Sandra Birdsell in her novel *The Russländer* (2001), when her protagonist, Katya Vogt, who had to leave her Ukrainian home behind, feels that her "journey ended in Manitoba." She also "was amazed at how similar the countryside was to the steppe" (349). The Mennonite migration thus comes full circle on the Canadian prairies.

Weier's novel and several other ones by Sandra Birdsell or Rudy Wiebe show that the memories of the Ukrainian uprising under the anarchist Nestor Makhno are still very much alive in Canadian Mennonite literature and can be seen to be part of what Zacharias calls the traumatic strain in Mennonite writing. A somewhat different, more balanced, or equally imbalanced, picture of the situation in Ukraine may arise if one reads up on the Ukrainian side of things, however, as it is depicted in Ukrainian-Canadian literary works.

But recently, contemporary Mennonite writers, among them Rudy Wiebe himself, have also dealt with traumatic break events much closer to home. In general, there seems to be a trend towards feeling depressed and traumatized in the North American Mennonite community which supposedly carries the burden of strict, sober and patriarchal religious fundamentalism. In his essay "Scatter Plots: Depression, Silence, and Mennonite Margins," American Mennonite poet and critic Jeff Gundy points to the surprisingly frequent occurrence of trauma and depression among Mennonites and tries to arrive at "some greater understanding of the ways that depression, silence, and Mennonite traditions have intersected, resonated and reverberated in human lives" (94). Gundy tentatively associates the trend towards "Mennonite Melancholia" (99) – Grace Kehler even refers to "melancholic martyrdom" (2011: 167) – with "feelings of depression, self-doubt, and even self-loathing associated with rigid power structures and sermons heavy on guilt and short on redemption" (Gundy 110).

For example, the year 2014 saw the publication of new novels by Rudy Wiebe and his younger fellow writer Miriam Toews, two of the leading Mennonite novelists in Canada representing two generations of successful Canadian Mennonite writers in English. Both their novels deal with what one might call the typical Mennonite theme of mourning, but what is different here is that the mourning is no longer about a historic break event in another country on another continent, but here the fateful events are located in the more recent past or in the present and in Canada. In both novels, Wiebe's *Come Back* and Toews's *All My Puny Sorrows*, the protagonists are faced with trauma on a very personal level, that is, with the suicide of a near relative, a son in *Come Back* and a sister in *All My Puny Sorrows*. These suicides invoke traumatic crisis situations that the survivors have to come to terms with.

Both these traumatic novels have in common that they are also based on actual situations of crisis in the personal lives of the authors, who have had to work through similar cases of bereavement in traumatic processes that have haunted them for years or even decades. In the first part of my paper, I will have a look at the ways in which the conservative structures of the Mennonite community and tradition may work on the one hand as a cause of personal alienation and crisis – leading perhaps even into suicide – and on the other as a supporting network accompanying the bereaved ones beyond this crisis.

Wiebe tells the story of a former English professor, Hal Wiens, whom we may remember from Wiebe's first novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (1962). One day in 2010, Hal sits in a coffee shop on Whyte Avenue in Edmonton with a First Nations friend, when he thinks he sees his son, Gabriel, passing by outside. Gabriel, though, as we learn, has been dead for twenty-five years; he committed suicide because he could not cope with a depression that seems to have started when he fell in love with a girl who had been much too young and innocent to be the partner he had believed she could be. Gabriel obviously felt attracted to young and beautiful "angelic" girls such as the gymnast Nadia Comaneci or the actress Nastassja Kinski. Although Gabriel was aware of the fact that a thirteen-year old cannot respond to the intellectual needs of a man in his twenties, the stream of consciousness style of his journals that are re-read by his father illustrates that Gabriel was caught – as is his father twenty-five years later – in his own obsession with depression. In Gabriel's case, this led him to commit suicide.

Obviously his father is still working through this fateful event and does so by re-reading not only his son's but also his own journals of the fateful year that brought all the family members involved to Germany, from where Gabriel continued to travel through Europe, partly on the tracks of his literary model and fellow melancholist Rainer Maria Rilke. But other than his son the father seems to achieve what Gabriel did not achieve. Therefore, twenty-five years ago Hal had accused Gabriel of not being able to accept the positive and saving character of the Christian message. And so I read the ending of the novel – open as it is – as a positive one as it refers to the message of the Sermon on the Mount blessing the poor in spirit (a line to which I will get back later).

Miriam Toews belongs to a younger generation of English-Canadian Mennonite writers, but mourning and depression are states of mind not unknown to her and her characters. While her early novel *A Complicated Kindness* shows us an unhappy young girl trying to find her way out of the depressing mood of a small Mennonite town south of Winnipeg, her very moving book about her father, *Swing Low: A Life* (2000), presents her view of his falling prey to a lifelong fight against depression once his career as a devoted teacher has come to an end. *All My Puny Sorrows* – her latest novel – description of the narrator's gifted sibling's suicide is probably based on the suicide of Miriam Toews's own sister, which took place in 2010. In *All My*

Puny Sorrows, Toews writes about Yolandi Von Riesen, a not overly successful or organized Mennonite writer of not overly undepressing young adult fiction who has to cope with her highly talented sister Elfrieda's tendencies towards depression and suicide. As in the case of Toews's father and sister, this fight against depression ends in defeat. In fact, the narrator's sister, who is a world-class concert pianist, wants her sibling to support her by accompanying her to Switzerland where she can legally commit assisted suicide. We follow the family's attempts at coming to terms with their loss, but in the last pages that we read Elf imagines what the trip to Switzerland together with her sister Yolandi might have been like.

Death and other bereavements in this novel – and in Wiebe's – are made bearable by a family and/or community relief system: There are parents and siblings, aunts and uncles who gather together and obey established rituals in the case of death. But there is also often a certain deadpan realism in coming to terms with death: Yoli's aunt, who has come to the hospital to look after her niece, suffers a heart attack herself and dies during surgery. Yoli's reaction offers a kind of gallows humour: "My aunt's surgery is over. So is her life." (241).

The break events in these contemporary Mennonite novels are thus no longer set in faraway Eastern Europe but rather in Canada. The European past is still there, but it does not seem to hold the young generation of Mennonites in the same grip that it had held the older ones. At one point, the first-person narrator of *All My Puny Sorrows* asks a fellow Mennonite in Winnipeg: "Do you think you're still suffering from your grandparents being massacred in Russia?" The answer is rather distanced: "Am I suffering? she asks. It was just my grandmother. She couldn't run because she was nine months pregnant. My grandfather made it with the other kids." (103).

In this context, I would like to have a closer look at the role that the act of writing – an activity not necessarily and traditionally associated with the Mennonite community – has here. Writing may after all be seen as another strategy resulting from Margaret Atwood's *survival* theme, from the creation of "creative non-victims." Writing can be an act of protest and rebellion. This was certainly the case for Elf, the narrator Yoli's gifted sister, who in her youth spread her abbreviated Coleridge trademark or "individual signature piece" (9) "All my puny sorrows," or rather "AMPS," all over the Mennonite small town of East Village. A Romantic poet is obviously not the literary inspiration one would expect for a young girl in a Mennonite context, but then Elf was always precocious, and Romantic heroes were probably a not so far-fetched choice for a schoolteacher's daughter in an otherwise conservative and most un-literary environment. Coleridge's lines about his own sister, from which the words are taken, even work nicely as a short summary (or even mirror image) of the relationship of the two Mennonite sisters in the novel:

> I too a sister had, an only Sister –
> She lov'd me dearly, and I doted on her!

To her I pour'd forth all my puny sorrows
(As a sick Patient in his Nurse's arms)
And of the heart those hidden maladies
That shrink asham'd from even Friendship's eye,
O! I have woke at midnight, and have wept,
Because she was not! … (237)

The last part of Yoli's final chapter imagines the two sisters on the eve of the planned but never realized assisted suicide in Switzerland. As we will see, this scene imagined by Yoli is not the only example of a kind of writing cure through which Yoli attempts to come to terms with her sister's death. At the beginning of this final chapter, Yoli had already written a letter to her dead sister in which she admits: "You knew I didn't have the guts to take you to Zurich, didn't you?" (318). So it is through writing that Yoli tries to come to terms with her guilt and her pain.

In Wiebe's *Come Back*, we have the family network that the bereaved father can rely on after his son's suicide, but also, as a sort of intratextual intertextuality within the novel itself, the important journals in which both the son, Gabriel, and his father, Hal, try to come to terms with the pain in their lives. And there is also an intertextual model, or rather two, on which father and son rely. For Gabriel it is the German poet Rilke, but Rilke here stands for fear rather than consolation: "But here two pages, four sides of words clawed, as seemed, off the ribs of Rilke's First Elegy days before Gabriel ever glimpsed Duino Castle brooding grey and cornered on a kink of the Adriatic: 'For beauty is nothing but terror's beginning … .'" (57). Or, as Gabriel puts it in his journal: "Terror in Frankfurt" (57).

On the other hand, for Hal, there is the intertextual religious comfort of the Bible and of the Sermon on the Mount, after all. When he has withdrawn from Edmonton to Aspen Creek, to the place where his son committed suicide, there is, in his deepest despair, an epiphanic moment:

> And from his staring incomprehension of the flames before him, of the open book in his lap, he gradually recognizes a pencil touch at the bottom corner of the page. The third verse of Matthew chapter 5:
>
> Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> …
>
> There is no need to look up, not now. He contemplates the message of the pencil touch. … He listens, and he hears the words of a letter that once came to him from Edmonton Prison, from a woman or a man he can never recall he had visited there:
>
> For many of us, our families have deliberately
> Forgotten the sound of our names
> But you know God does hear
> The cry of the poor
>
> Does he know it? [Hal wonders about himself.] It may be he is not poor enough. Not yet.

Was Gabriel?
He waits. (268)

If we compare the stances of the two Mennonite writers dealing with mourning and suicide, what becomes obvious is that Wiebe forgoes the use of any comforting humour. As Robert Zacharias puts it, Toews's use of humour to discuss suicide stands out, in particular, when placed beside Rudy Wiebe's new novel, *Come Back*, which refuses even a glimmer of what he has called the "'elusion' of humour in its own discussion of suicide" (Zacharias 2015: 179). Still, whether we are willing to accept the comfort of humour and of human company – as in *All My Puny Sorrows* – or if we wait for the positive comfort of being able to join the "poor in spirit" who will inherit the kingdom of heaven (Wiebe 267), the message seems to be that yes, there is trauma, but that there is also a way beyond this trauma and that – even though Wiebe purposefully misquotes Leonard Cohen's famous line in his novel – it is to be hoped that light and not only the night will get back into life: While Cohen had written "There is a crack in everything./That's how the light gets in" (188), Wiebe insists that "There's a crack in everything, that's how the night gets in." (253).

This positive light, I would claim, can be brought in through the act of writing and perhaps also reading, as we can see in Yolandi's working through her depression by writing letters to her deceased sister, and – though more passively – in Hal's comforting reading of the Bible.

The positive aspect of the act of writing also becomes obvious in the work of other contemporary Mennonite writers. For example, Ted Dyck and Victor Enns are writers of Mennonite extraction who have both for many years served the Prairie literary community in various functions. Both are established poets whose earlier publications (or at least their titles) may have stirred some unrest among a more conservative readership, whether it be Enns's *Jimmy Bang Poems* (1979) or Dyck's *Pisscat Songs* (1984). Both have worked as editors of important literary journals such as – in Dyck's case – *Grain* from Saskatchewan or – in Enns's case – the Mennonite literary magazine *Rhubarb* from Winnipeg. Furthermore, Dyck has edited and contributed to several critical volumes on prairie writing. What makes these writers interesting in the context of this paper, however, is that both authors' lives have been severely influenced by depression, about which both are open in their publications and/or on their websites.

Ted Dyck publicly talked about his own fight with depression on national radio in 2000. In a moving talk that describes his integration into a support group he also shows how writing turned into a sort of self-therapy: "In the meantime, I had begun to write poetry, to express my suppressed fears in veiled terms. Soon I was a published author with my first book out … ." (2000). When his latest volume of poetry, *Cutthroats and Other Poems* (2014), was launched he described the writing process

in a press release as "a reinvention of a self besieged by clinical depression" leading to "the author's later emergence as a practitioner and facilitator of writing-for-therapy."

In his introductory essay to the Mental Health issue of the Mennonite literary magazine *Rhubarb* published in the summer of 2011, Dyck wonders whether religion is "*a barrier to mental health – equivalently, a factor in mental illness – amongst its practitioners*" (2011: 3; italics in original). His argument is not unlike the one made by Jeff Gundy about Mennonite melancholia earlier in this paper:

> There's a surprising amount of research into this question. At one extreme are claims that only a fundamentalist belief of some sort (religious or secular) can save the individual from mental illness; at the other extreme are claims that, by definition, fundamentalist belief of any sort is antithetical to most notions of mental health. As is often the case, the evidence to date is considerably more complicated. It suggests that the best scenario is that a humanistic, supportive form of belief may be positively correlated with mental health; the worst, that a fundamentalist, rigid form of belief may be positively correlated with mental illness. (2011: 3)

The contributors to the Mental Health Issue of *Rhubarb* write about their own depression or about dealing with depression harrowing family members or clients. One of the contributors mentions that there is often no support network for those who suffer from depression: "Say Cancer and the world is there to help. Say Depression and the world listens to its fingers (plugs its ears)." (Friesen 6). Literary therapy and writing groups can help sufferers (see Chavis; Mazza), for example the Saskatchewan branch of the CMHA's Writing for Your Life program and other writing therapy projects supported by the Saskatchewan Arts Board. In a report on the Writing for Your Life program we read that

> Writing is a low-cost and effective method of engaging language-based aspects of recovery. Writing is integral, even necessary for the expression of recovery within the community. Writing for therapy is therefore well-placed to be a specific part of recovery oriented, community-based mental health service delivery. (2012: 3)

Dyck's poems are not only very personal, but they also show his impressive knowledge and command of traditional literary forms. For example, most of the cutthroat poems in the central part of his collection play with forms of the sonnet. And in fact, Dyck often remains much closer to the traditional sonnet form than other prairie writers such as Robert Kroetsch, whom he mentions as "the most important influence on my writing life" and to whose memory the volume is dedicated. If one goes back to Dyck's own statement of his self being besieged by clinical depression, his reliance on a traditional form may be seen as confirming Torsten Caeners's statement in which the German scholar doubts that free verse is really the optimal mode of poetic writing in poetry therapy:

> … free verse is often … regarded as the only appropriate form of verse for therapy. Free verse can leave clients lost and keep them from tapping into their creative powers, however, because it is precisely not like free association. In free association, the basically chaotic thoughts that emerge are given order, are placed within some form of framework by the therapist. (243)

Dyck's book starts with a meditation entitled "Writing the Cutthroat," in which he elegiacally mourns "the end of the South Ram as you have learned to know it," describes the natural course of nature in which fishing for trout reminds the persona of his own death, turning into a *memento mori*: "in writing the cutthroat, you have written yourself." (2014: xiv). The numbered sequence of fifteen "Cutthroat Poems" starts with an elegy entitled "The Fisher." Written by an experienced poet and teacher, the sonnets play with the expectations the readers may have of traditional Shakespearean or Italian sonnet forms, but they also include allusions to and playful quotations of 17th century metaphysical poets such as Andrew Marvell, of postmodern wordplay or of traditional Christmas carols. "Cutthroat #15," also self-ironically subtitled "The Cliché Edge," positions fisher and fish in the perennial repetition of eating and being eaten, fully aware of the overtones of the eucharist:

> When I lift the last morsel to my lips
> I know that as I eat this holy fish
> so too will I be eaten. I drink
> my brandy, my blood. (2014: 19)

Other sequences in this volume include the "Ram River Poems" about the pristine, graceful and threatened landscape about which "all the clichés are true," and for the explanation of whose beauty the poet had to invent the "Gods of the River Ram." After the "Bone Creek Blues" playing with geographical and linguistic undecidability, the sequence entitled "Mennomonk, the poem" creates an arguably autobiographical persona presenting an ironic and somewhat cynical worldview recreating and deconstructing the biblical creation myth in a way reminiscent of Ted Hughes's *Crow* poems. Very moving poems are included in the section "Moment of Perfection," remembering personal events in the past, or in "In Remembrance," in which the persona recalls pivotal points of his family history.

While in Dyck's case the remedy might be the return to (writing about) pristine (though threatened) nature in the Rocky Mountains, Victor Enns has chosen a topic that is rather unusual for the pacifist or peace-loving Mennonite community: the war in Afghanistan, Canadian participation in which did not necessarily correspond to the Canadian self-image of peacekeeping. Enns's poems do not show as much of his own personality as his earlier volumes do, but they certainly offer shocking and moving insights into the traumatic and traumatizing events going on in other parts

of the global village in which they are not that far removed from Canada and from the Prairies after all.

Victor Enns is the former editor of *Rhubarb*, who has also openly commented on his fight with depression on his personal website and blog and is quoted by Jeff Gundy on Mennonite depression:

> "From personal experience I believe depression (particularly unipolar, severe, clinical depression) silences my ability to imagine, to create, to communicate and to care. When people ask what it feels like to be clinically depressed, I often refer to how boring it is. There seems to be so little 'content' or 'experience,' even of the imagination, in a severe depression." (Enns qtd. in Gundy 112)

Compared to Dyck's Rocky Mountains which offer a sort of refuge, Enns presents a quite different landscape in which the traumatic death inflicted is not a consequence of the "fight" of a single fly fisher but rather of weapons of mass destruction. Trauma is not primarily personally motivated but political. Based on Enns's personal travels to Afghanistan, this volume presents four different soldiers' views of their exposure to the war in Afghanistan and the traumatic consequences participation in this war has on their personalities. According to their respective personal character and education, these soldiers respond differently to the traumatizing events. The first one, Albert, seems to be well-educated as he muses about being transported to the battle field in an aircraft named Hercules: "I've read Homer. I loved the *Iliad*." He echoes the beginning of Virgil's *Aeneid* when he claims that "What little forgiveness God brings to me –/I sing." (8). At the same time, he and his fellow soldiers feel lost in the Afghan environment and thus build an archetypally Canadian *inuksuk* at the airfield "without knowing quite what it is, like us/out of place" (9). His intellectualism gives way to frustration and to getting used to shooting at and killing the enemy.

Enns describes the feelings of these men fighting in a country far away from Canada, but he does not condemn them from a simplistic or facile pacifist position, however much one might be willing and tempted to share it as a reader. He tries to understand the soldiers' motivation and needs, and his engagement in this type of work is appreciatively commented on by an Afghanistan veteran, Neil Maclean, in his afterword in which he states that

> Victor Enns' writing impressed me; it was artistic but didn't possess the naivety that I had been seeing up to this point form artists without a military background. I felt it was important that his work reflect the real passion soldiers have, that it broke through the stereotypes people hold … . (175)

Also, in these poems he is not interested in poetic structure as much as Ted Dyck in *Cutthroats* is fascinated with traditional forms that he uses to represent the fragility of (human) nature.

While Dyck and Enns are male Mennonite authors showing their fight with depression and the role literature can play in this context, poet Di Brandt presents another important, feminist perspective on Mennonite depression, which is in a way doubly oppressive as traditional Mennonite society is not exactly a feminist haven. As I have stated before, Di Brandt has in a way come full circle: At first, as a young feminist, she parted with (or was even shunned by) the conservative and fundamentalistically masculinist Mennonite community. This process of suffering and abjection, described for example in *Questions I Asked My Mother* (1987), was later replaced by a sort of re-integrative movement which Ann Hostetler describes in the following way:

> She seeks to repair the damage of such alienation from the land and within herself by articulating an ethic of care that she found latent in the more reciprocal practices of everyday life preserved in the oral traditions of Reinland, Manitoba, and other such villages, a heritage that the young Brandt herself outright rejected in her search for a language that would transport her from the village and into the world. (99)

And this oral tradition, which I guess had therapeutic value, was a feminine rather than masculine narrative. In *Dancing Naked* (1996), Brandt refers to her female Mennonite ancestors, who

> suffered such deep trauma during the Renaissance and the Burning Times … that they shut down their need and desire for public language, public speech for nearly 400 years, and brought up their daughters to be humble and submissive and obedient and quiet. But they also fed us with nursery rhymes and fairy tales and family stories, and they fed us with their hopes and dreams that some day their daughters and granddaughters would undo this great silencing, and begin to speak and rage and celebrate publicly again. (1996: 159)

Other important female Mennonite voices are those of Dora Dueck and Sarah Klassen, the latter of whom recently has added fiction to her poetry repertoire. In *The Wittenbergs* (2013) she shows historical trauma and traumatic memories as well as genetics haunting a Winnipeg family, but the tendency towards depression here seems to come from the non-Mennonite part of the family. But still, also here writing about the Mennonite break events both historical and genetic is once again the young generation's way of coming to terms with trauma. Mia, the protagonist, undergoes several rites of passage (including a harrowing road accident in Ukraine) during her last year in high school, and in a school project that turns into an epiphanic recognition of her heritage she writes about her family's past in Europe: "Mia will continue at McDonald's but her real work this winter will be to complete what she has begun: her family's story. … She will make out of what she has been given a narrative worthy of those who lived it." (Pos. 6051).

Dora Dueck also describes the traumatic transition from Ukraine/Russia to Manitoba in *The Hidden Thing* (2010), but "the hidden thing" in the title of her novel concerns an event that took place in Canada, the unwanted pregnancy of the Mennonite servant in a WASP Winnipeg family. This break event is another traumatic experience that haunts Dueck's character Maria Klassen for decades until she can in the end meet her son and make peace, at least with him, even without publicly admitting her motherhood. While in Sarah Klassen's novel it had been the granddaughter who wrote down the history of her family, in Dueck's text it is the protagonist's granddaughter who attends her funeral, albeit in a rather "hidden" manner (325).

These literary texts by leading Mennonite poets and novelists in Canada show quite different but equally moving approaches to dealing with "Mennonite Melancholia." They range from modern takes on Shakespearean forms and questions of disappearing natural beauty to free verse responses to the threats against humanity characterizing our age to the comforting rediscovery of feminist traces in a seemingly male-dominated part of society and to the appropriation of Mennonite history and break events by re-inscribing them into new and personal versions. The world is traumatic, but writing stories and poetry, although the latter "makes nothing happen," as Auden (1473, l. 36) has told us, may give us hope after all.

Note

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Part III
Re/Voicings of Trauma and Violence

The War After the War
Trauma in George Payerle's Novel *Unknown Soldier*

Konrad Gross

The title of this essay has been taken from a conference held in Kiel in 2006 devoted to *Der Krieg nach dem Krieg. Spätfolgen bei traumatisierten Menschen* [*The War After the War. Long-term Effects of Traumatized People*] (Spranger). The papers given at this conference were mainly about what wars do to children who had experienced bombings or had been refugees, and/or who later had been affected by the silence of the parents' generation on Hitler's war or whose own children had inherited their traumas. Two papers dealt with present-day wars, one with stressful events for German soldiers in Afghanistan (Robrahn in Spranger), the other with traumatized child soldiers from Central Africa (Gestrich in Spranger). I am here concerned not with the impact of wars on children, but will examine the artistic representation of long-term effects of trauma on the chief protagonist of George Payerle's novel *Unkown Soldier* (1987), Sam Collister, a troubled World War II veteran. The essay opens with a few personal reminiscences, before the novel will be under closer scrutiny.

When I grew up in a small village near Limburg in the State of Hesse during the 1950s/60s, there were men who as soldiers had survived the war. When as a university student I took jobs in road work during the holidays to earn some money, I heard veterans occasionally talk about their war experiences. Their narratives were very selective. I do not remember that anyone of them ever mentioned to have shot somebody or to have seen comrades killed or severely wounded or to have been involved in war-time action and witnessed atrocities. Instead for most of them in retrospect the war held a kind of spell, was even presented as some sort of adventure: Wasn't it exciting to have been to foreign countries which one would never have visited had it not been for the war: Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Denmark, Norway, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Romania, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, North Africa? I remember only one lorry driver whose voice was an exception, as he questioned the tacitly implied heroism of some of the stories.

If one defines a traumatic experience as the confrontation with a terrifying situation outside the normal life world, then the war must have been such an experience. Many humans, be they directly affected by, or only witnesses to, a traumatic event, are probably helpless to cope with this experience. However, none of the men I listened to seemed to have suffered from trauma. Was it because they were still under the influence of the Nazi ideology of the hard Aryan fighter? Or was it because in those days the impact of trauma on the psyche of an individual was ignored or

hushed up as one did not want to be branded as a nut case? What would have happened in a small village community if such cases had been made public? They would probably have been ostracized and their company shunned as they had broken some sort of tacit consent that only weaklings would admit of having been psychologically affected. Although psychotherapists maintain that not every veteran became a victim of trauma, I believe that the physical and/or emotional symptoms of what today is known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were swept under the carpet in some of the families involved and that a whole generation drowned any memories of, or qualms about, an unpleasant past through working hard, making money and indulging in the lures of the consumer world during the reconstruction era known as West Germany's economic miracle. In East Germany war trauma was considered taboo for a different reason. According to the state doctrine the German Democratic Republic claimed to represent the new and better Germany, which in contrast to the "revanchist" Federal Republic had nothing to do with Hitler and his war (see Spranger 13, and Seidler in Spranger 52–54).

Remembering only the safe parts of a past and forgetting all the rest are apparently among the most powerful strategies of both societies and individuals suppressing what is disturbing and disquieting. It seems that Sam Collister in *Unknown Soldier* confirms this response by confessing in a key scene: "The ones that were there don't want to hear it and the ones who weren't there don't want to hear it." (156).

George Payerle, born as son of Hungarian immigrants in Vancouver in 1945, is a B.C. fiction writer and poet, whose work has been largely neglected in literary criticism. Up to now *Unknown Soldier* has been dealt with in only one scholarly article by Italian scholar Elsa Linguanti. Apart from this there is one entry in William H. New's 2002 *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada* (Hatch), yet none in *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature* (ed. Kröller), *The Cambridge History of Canadian Literature* (ed. Howells and Kröller), or *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Literature* (ed. Sugars). And though the events told in *Unknown Soldier* play in the 1970s, war experiences constantly intrude into the consciousness of Sam Collister and still haunt the veteran's memory many years later. As such the work would have been a worthwhile subject for Dagmar Novak's *Dubious Glory. The Two World Wars and the Canadian Novel*, had its author not stopped her study of Canadian war fiction with Timothy Findley's *The Wars* (1977). It is also not mentioned in Sherrill Grace's *Landscapes of War and Memory* which deals with texts from 1977 to 2007.

One can only guess why Payerle and his novel have been largely ignored by literary critics, though *Unknown Soldier* on publication was reviewed several times. Elsa Linguanti's concise summary of eight reviews shows not only their mixed responses (see Linguanti 253–258), but also how even more positive voices fail to do full justice to the book. To quote from her criticism:

> Does mediating between a book and its readers imply judging whether the book is a failure or a success (on what basis?), … or does it more soberly imply reading the book *the way it is written* and trying to find out (and communicate to other readers) how it works, that is, which is its idiolect? (Linguanti 252)

Linguanti's article is a thorough analysis of the novel's "idiolect," of the manner in which the story is told, and as such a narratological defence of *Unknown Soldier*. Like her, I would like to help rescue Payerle from oblivion by showing his masterful handling of a veteran's long-term war trauma. Only one of the reviews summarized by Linguanti mentions trauma, yet the reviewer plays down its impact on an individual and is in particular appalled by Collister's often rude and obscene language (see Keith 178–181). Possibly other readers were also put off by this kind of language which, however, is not the only linguistic register used. In addition, the neglect of the novel may also result from the belated discovery of the subject of trauma by literary scholarship in the mid-1990s.

In a presentation of his novel, published in *BC Book World* in the spring of 1987, Payerle told the presenter of how as a youngster he had developed an interest in the history of the war and for one and a half decades had talked to over 100 war veterans some of whose recollections became the basis for his novel. He mentioned that "[m]any old soldiers don't want to talk about the black wall" (Anon). With black wall he meant a mental wall shutting out war memories. But in his dedication he mentions in particular two ex-soldiers by name who not only told him gruesome stories about their experiences, but also read the manuscript before they died giving him high praise for the authenticity of his narrative. This could suggest to read the novel as a psychological document in fictionalized form and a case study on the long-term effects of a real person's war trauma. In other words, this would account for the work's specific quality of realism. However, the problem with this is a dispute among trauma researchers about the narratibility or non-narratibility of traumatic experiences. Cathy Caruth states in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* that trauma cannot be captured in words, and hence evades representation (see 1999: 4). She sees the reason for this in the unassimilability of trauma whose abnormality the human brain as the seat of cognitive handling of events cannot integrate into its framework of established schemata.

The view of the unspeakability of trauma is not shared by all researchers, who point, for example, to the great variety of traumatic manifestations and indeed the existence of such stories (for example Herman, mentioned in Modlinger and Sonntag 5). Michelle Balaev in *The Nature of Trauma in American Novels* criticizes that many literary scholars dealing with trauma in literature focus mainly on pathological aspects rather than exploring the imaginative potential of the novel as an art form with freedoms which enable it to go beyond a mere illustration of psychological theories of trauma (cf. Balaev 3). "What can literature do," to quote Martin Modlinger and

Philipp Sonntag, "if not offer understanding, then at least a perspective on that 'we' have not experienced" (Modlinger and Sonntag 9). As readers of *Unknown Soldier* we are drawn into the mind of the traumatized protagonist who as a reflector figure allows us insights into his pain. In keeping with this I would like to analyse some of the specific literary strategies of dealing with trauma without turning a blind eye to psychological trauma theories in *Unknown Soldier*.

The traumatic event in *Unknown Soldier* is introduced right at the beginning, in the novel's Prologue. Located in time and place in the past, i. e. in Belgium 1944, it is presented from Collister's perspective, and the use of the present tense turns the readers into witnesses of a horrifying scene: the aftermath of the taking of a German defense position by Canadian (Vancouver Light) infantry with great loss of life and only a handful of survivors, one of them platoon sergeant Sam Collister whose best friend Hugh Young is among those killed. Collister is the focaliser through whose eyes we perceive the carnage "of exploding steel and men's flesh," "Hugh's gutted corpse" (1, 2) or hear the panicky screams of another soldier whose face and uniform are covered by a dead officer's brain. Despite this horrible view Collister does not respond like a traumatized individual. In the face of the death of all officers he is forced to take the command, managing to bring his group of survivors to safety, and he expresses his hope for the speedy end of the war and their return home:

> Then they could all go home to Vancouver and Victoria and little places like Duncan and Cowichan. Him too, with his English girl walking down peacetime streets, summer snow on the green mountains. But not Hugh. No – I'll never forget, my friend. Hugh's blood hot and thick on his hands. His skin tingles where it carries that memory. (3)

Only the last sentence of the quote is a slight hint that the memory of Hugh's death will trouble him later on. Otherwise the Prologue seems to confirm Caruth's statement that "… trauma is not locatable in the single violent event in an individual's past, but rather in the way its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on" (1995: 4). This means that a chief focus of work with trauma is on its belated manifestation(s) and the victim's crisis of survival.

This is what happens in the book. Going to war when he was nineteen Collister returns to Vancouver six years later at age twenty-five. Married to an English woman, Dot, since 1943 he fathers a son whom he names after his dead friend Hugh. Unable to come to grips with civilian life and what he regards as the meaningless and shallow existence in peacetime society, he separates from his family, cuts all communication with wife and son, lives on occasional jobs in Victoria, drowns his problems in alcohol, and hides his bitterness often behind rough and offensive language, and belligerent behaviour. The novel tells his story some three decades later, when he is 59 and continually haunted by his war memories and particularly, though not only, by the memory of Hugh's death in Belgium. It is certainly no coincidence

that Payerle has the reader view Collister's behaviour more or less through the traumatized victim's mind, not through an outsider or some external narrative authority. (For an extensive analysis of the novel's narrative strategy see Linguanti.) In a telling scene Collister has an aggressive argument about war with a woman (Effie) in a Vancouver bar, from where he is thrown out, and then struggles drunk out into the night. I would like to quote a little more extensively from this scene in chapter VIII, "A Graveyard", in order to show how Payerle presents Collister's pain:

> God what have I done? He blunders through the lobby, looking for a back door that doesn't lead to Gilford but does lead to Haro Street where Hugh [his son] lives. He wants to run but can't, legs strange and heavy as though the air were gumbo. To get away from Effie and her stinging eyes. The mud full of deadmen and exploding steel. Blood flowers. To run anywhere that's away. Labyrinthine passages where every way seems wrong, a place that wasn't meant to be gotten in and out of. Heavy glass doors.
>
> …
>
> The wet shoes feel square on his feet, heavy as combat boots. Walking feels like he is leaning forward to follow his belly and sticking his legs out to keep from falling. A sack of dark guts pulling him down. Blood would be black in this light.
>
> At the corner Denman Street blares at him. Harsh glare, noise like a dozen jukebox cafés. He leans both hands against the lamp post and sidles around it, craning his neck to see what street he was on. Where do we go from here? The beach. The bushes in the park. The Lockup. The dark. Denman Street pummels him. A large old guy in a seedy jacket praying to a streetlamp. Waiting to puke. Flashes of light. Blue-white airbursts of Belgium.
>
> …

Collister is in search of Effie's place because he wants to apologize for his rudeness, but cannot find it:

> He looks at the stairs and tiny nameplates sequestered in shadows of the weird blue light. His body sags. No forgiveness from Effie. No absolution there any more than from the priests who called God the Supreme Commander. As if God chose sides. An Eisenhower above Eisenhower. A bigger toothpaste grin. As if supreme commanders were entitled to forgive anybody. Can we forgive them? More churches in beer parlours than were ever filled on a Sunday. The eyes chasing him out of that grotty Eden, a death's head amongst the generous and kind and lonely-hearted.
>
> I'm dead, he thinks. The only thing alive in me is death.
>
> …

His nightly stroll takes him to the Lost Lagoon which at night is not a nature sanctuary, but a threatening place:

> In a clearing among the spaced boles of birches and fragrant tents of cedar the rhododendrons hulk like camouflaged armour. You're not getting me. The cage of a tennis court

> vague to his right. The lagoon stretches black ahead of him under willow fronds and his feet start slipping on the slope greasy with mud and bird droppings. Twin lamps of cars glint on the water like ghost-eyes reflected from a Stygian shore. He teeters at the edge, swaying. (64–67)

The scene does not only prove the diversity of Payerle's stylistic register, but also shows how Collister's mind is swamped by feelings of anger, homelessness, disorientation, guilt, self-accusation, loss of control, and memories from the past. He is given to quite contradictory feelings. On the one hand he feels persecuted and watched, as the frequent use of the central motif of the eyes indicates (see Linguanti 235). On the other hand, he has the feeling of being invisible and insignificant. Finally the reference to the Styx, the mythological river flowing into the Greek underworld, suggests that Collister has reached a low point in his life and is on the verge of being sucked down by his pain.

I believe a trauma therapist might be able to read these and similar paragraphs as psychological documents and place Collister's behaviour in a chart of traumatic symptoms. At this point it is necessary to return once more to Keith's review mentioned earlier. Though Keith mentions the term "traumatic" once, he denies the psychological credibility of the protagonist whom he calls a person with intellectual limitations, without "any powers of reflection", unable to articulate himself except in "standard obscenities of the 1980s," and using "the War as an excuse for his deficiencies." Keith's comment, "we come to no awareness of his [Sam's] grievance" (180), is basically a denial of the long-term effects of severe trauma, based on his understanding that traumatic suffering is not the normal way of things as "thousands of veterans with similar experiences were able to return to steady jobs and a responsible position in society" (180).

An attentive reader is also not easily put off by the jumble of often disconnected thoughts and feelings of the protagonist, although it takes some work to piece stream-of-consciousness-like memory snippets together. It is well-known that memory plays an important role in identity construction, also in this novel. In the Prologue Collister presents himself as a competent and responsible leader, who is acknowledged by his soldiers and who knows he belongs, i. e. he appears to be someone with a self-assured identity. However, in the present this self-image is shattered, his traumatic pain makes him see society in a one-dimensional way, as not understanding, indifferent and only bent on money-making. His war memories which intrude again and again into his consciousness account for his identity crisis with a low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness, isolation, alienation, and the feeling that he should better have died during the war. The frequent focus on his physicality and his obsession with bodily functions like drinking, farting, pissing, shitting, etc. are the only signals that he is still alive (see 97). Collister's war memories are spread throughout the novel, and are presented incoherently. This

does not confirm a statement in Aleida Assmann's *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*: "Trauma, das ist die Unmöglichkeit der Narration" ["Trauma, that is the impossibility of narration"] (Assmann 264, qtd. in Neumann 44). Birgit Neumann explains that this does not mean the fundamental non-narratibility of highly distressing traumatic experiences, but the "Unfähigkeit … traumatische Erinnerungen in einen diachron strukturierten Zusammenhang zu integrieren" ["the incapability … to integrate traumatic memories into a diachronically structured narrative"] (44). In other words, traumatic memories overtax an individual's capability of making sense of them and of integrating these in a meaningful way into one's ordinary life. In *Unknown Soldier* things can be told, though in a fragmented form, not in a chronologically unfolding order.

Collister's memories do not recall the full original event at once. The different incidents are unravelled piece by piece. In the Prologue he does not depict how Hugh died, instead another incident which is here only alluded to later moves into the centre of his memories. At the beginning Collister sees "the remains of Hugh Young, … a gutted corpse stiff under the groundsheet, and what the Belgian girl had buried" (2). At this point we do not understand the reference to the Belgian girl who in the course of his memory attacks occupies an ever growing place in Collister's troubled mind. At first the reader can only glean bits and pieces of the incident, not because of the protagonist's unwillingness to talk, but because he is overwhelmed by his emotions and too agitated to continue when he starts to talk. Eventually the full story is disclosed: Out of fear of a possible German counter-attack Collister saw himself unable to risk his soldiers' lives and have Hugh's body buried. He remembers how Lise, the Belgian girl who was in love with Hugh, asked him for a knife with which she cut out Hugh's heart for burial in the frozen ground. This is a powerful and double-edged scene, double-edged because Payerle assigns to the traumatic event also a positive message. Its recall is triggered by guilt feelings, at the same time it contains a message which the protagonist gradually comes to understand and acknowledge for his own life: the power of love as exemplified in Lise's incredibly courageous act.

The novel is about Collister's redemption which is effected by a group of sympathetic listeners, through whom he reconnects to people and regains family: Lily, a middle-aged woman, with whom he begins a sexual relationship; his son Hugh who after twenty years establishes contact with the father; and Hugh's girlfriend Nancy whom Collister accepts as the daughter whom he never had. Especially the two women act as therapeutic listeners. While Lily in response to his yet unfinished story of the Belgian girl tells him he should start to live, Nancy later in the novel hears the complete story, when she wakes him from a nightmare in which he is revisited by scenes which are omitted from the Prologue. For the first time we are confronted with the full horror of Hugh's death scene, Collister's terrified reaction, which makes us doubtful of his initial presentation as a self-assured leader, and Lise's heroic and 'charitable' act. The protagonist's full confession to Nancy starts his partial departure

from the traumatic invasions. Lise in his memory of the past and the two women in the present become Collister's saviours, his dark angels as he calls them. In his mind Lise and Lily even fuse, Lily becomes Lise's doubleganger, which indicates that he has finally understood the significance of Lise's merciful act for his own life. He is ready to enter into a permanent relationship with Lily and thus give his life a positive turn.

Collister's process of redemption is completed through finding his place in the present. At the beginning he feels out of step with time and place: "I won't go into history. This place hasn't any. Not ours. With luck I'll go to fertilizer under some enormous fir. But they'll likely burn what they find and throw it away." (67). Collister is like a colonial, for whom Canada is obviously a country with no history and hence an uncertain identity. As a result he keeps asking himself, if he rather belongs to England and should have stayed there like his sister Charlotte who during the war worked as a Red Cross nurse. When he finally decides to visit her in London, she is dying and her death is coupled with his gradual knowledge that England is not home. This recognition is furthered by a mix of historical references which often dominate his thoughts and reach from memories of the war back to the middle ages and antiquity. Historical recalls, be they conscious or in dreams, are almost always about wars, conquests and violence. Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Normans, Empire, Blitzkrieg all parade through his mind. To give just one example, when he waits for the tube in a London underground station: "He waits for the serried ranks of Roman legionaries to come marching from the bowels of Londinium, the sound of their sandals and shields and drums. A hot gust of wind swooshes over him. The earth shakes and a southbound train thunders to its platform. Blood-red beast." (192).

These and many other historical flashbacks, in which, for example, Hannibal, Napoleon, or the German Panzer General Heinz Guderian crop up, embed the protagonist's fate in a larger historical context. They help us to see Collister's fate not as something that is singular and affects a single individual, but as something that is common and has happened to many soldiers all through the ages. With the consciousness that Canada is the place where he belongs Collister leaves England and returns to the people who for him define home.

Keith has found fault also with the romance-like ending of the novel: Collister gets a job, enters into a stable relationship with Lily, and has regained a family with son Hugh and his girlfriend Nancy. The happy ending is even bolstered with a literary convention found in Victorian novels. He inherits money and property from Charlotte. However, in contrast to the complete absence of trauma in Ralph Connor's war romance *The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land* (1919), which focusses on patriotism, honour, religious idealism, manliness, and sacrifice (see Novak 7), the ending of *Unknown Soldier* tones down the naiveté of the older romance. There is no final solution to Collister's pain and an ultimate rescue from his trauma. The entries in his journal which he has started to write do not indicate that his troubled

mind has found complete peace, and Lily who hears his screams at night believes that his traumatic memories "might never go away" (326). This less hopeful outlook is supported by the time scheme of the novel. A proper romance would have placed the happy ending in spring, whereas the book begins and ends in winter. "Prologue" (winter); I "The Canadian" (summer); II "In England" (late summer); III "Getting Home" (fall and winter); "Epilogue" (winter).

The title of the novel *Unknown Soldier* recalls immediately the many monuments worldwide dedicated to the memory of the unknown soldier, where politicians and their guests with solemn faces and accompanied by a guard of honour usually lay down wreaths. On the jacketcover of the first edition of Erich Maria Remarque's famous novel *Im Westen nichts Neues* [*All Quiet on the Western Front*] (1929) it says: "Remarques Buch ist das Denkmal unseres unbekannten Soldaten von allen Toten geschrieben" ["Remarque's book is the monument of our unknown soldier written by all who died"]. An apt motto for Payerle's novel would accordingly need to read: *Unknown Soldier* has been written for all the dead and for all survivors whose traumatic pain has been ignored.

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Stammer and Song

Laurie Ricou

His mind began to stammer the way it always did
whenever it was challenged by something it could
not accept.
(Timothy Findley *The Wars*)

Challenged

I don't want to talk about this. My mind stammers. My talk this afternoon stammers. Challenged by worlds of trauma, it stutters. Breaks into short sections. Switches abruptly. Lapses often into silences. I want you to listen into those silences, because our topic refuses words. I also listen for the song that shapes silence. Even birdsong. But I struggle with singing. The singing only comes later.

Narrow Road

I begin, uneasily, with a book that seems to counter almost everything else I try to say. Richard Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) seems to revel in violence, indulging in graphic descriptions of human brutality. Japanese troops use prisoners of war as slave labour: they must build a jungle railway to carry "the Japanese spirit" (133) to Burma and eventually to India. Narrative, and railroad, are built upon the sounds, the smells, the sensations of torture – the subhuman extended and then extended still further. Nothing evasive in page after page of gore and screaming. The reader does not want to read further. Yet, in turning to the observers' reactions (hence, to the readers' reactions) Flanagan re-frames avoidance: "So they saw, but they did not see; so they heard, but they did not hear; and they knew, they knew it all, but still they tried not to know." (254). Such (staccato) psychology sums up the problematic of writing trauma: you need a language that knows, *but tries not to know*. Flanagan's title, and its counterpoint to terror, borrows from Basho's haibun (the form combines prose and haiku), the poet's meditation on five months of walking through Japan. Haiku disciplines the rhythms of trauma. A very spare form [some pages are blank but for the few words of a single haiku (53, 157)], discontinuous, with emotional nuance and novel perception, against the horrible sustained agonies we have just read, and fear we will have to read again. Somewhere order, as in aesthetic forms, collides with order as unthinking obedience to the Empire. In silences lies

awareness of an irresolvable disparity. Haiku registers it in puzzled pauses: a few syllables mark a delicate beauty, pushing the reader to re-read the silence after torture.

Speechless

In most of my reading, I try to consider the *how* of the writing. Probing the *how* will be more complexly involving than summarizing the *what*. In response to the doubled title of this volume, I am more interested in the words than the worlds. So how *do you* write what cannot be written about? And how do you write what *stops speech*? In some sense the inadequacy of language, its limitations, is always the writer's topic and dilemma. How do you find the words to describe the texture of a tulip petal? The bouquet of the cedar tree after a spring rain? We critics routinely find and celebrate solutions to such problems in sequences of synaesthetic images, in surprising metaphors, in alliterative and assonantal patterns. But in the face of genocide or broken bodies the challenge is different in degree if not in kind: style, in the sense of accomplished style, does not work; image and metaphor and sound pattern seem gratuitous – as they embroider, they deflect, conceal.

All that is possible is silence. But silence, no words, is no answer either. Silence also *avoids.* It won't address causes, or stop violence, or find resolution.

Archives

Another beginning. In 1977, I was asked to speak at a conference about violence in the Canadian novel. Timothy Findley's *The Wars* had just been published. As I wrote at the time, "Findley describes the violent horror of war's incidents in excruciating detail, detail apparently more carefully researched, certainly more convincing as documentary, than anything we have had in [English] Canadian fiction." (128).

Raised on stories of my great uncle's experience in World War I, and amidst questions about the aftermath of World War II, I found Findley's novel compelling – then and now. I sensed that I was in "the same relationship to *the* war, and to the wars as Findley's narrator. … Poring over his research in a quiet archive, the narrator mimics the country's experience of war as something of overwhelming violence that happens somewhere else." (128–129). Seeking to understand from afar, the narrator stumbles toward a biography of Robert Ross, a young Canadian soldier, while testing an enquiry into the nature of heroism. The search draws the reader in because its telling is both teasingly sure of itself – and uneasily aware of its own (and our own) limitations (129).

Stutter and Shuffle and Halt

As you read *The Wars*, you begin to learn about Robert Ross. You meet Rowena, Robert's sister. Rowena is hydrocephalic. She keeps ten rabbits in the stable. Those rabbits keep her alive. In the stable, nearby her beloved rabbits, Rowena falls and dies. Robert blames himself. On the day of Rowena's funeral, Robert fights with Teddy Budge. Budge has been brought from the Ross factory to kill Rowena's rabbits.

Later, Robert soothes his bruises in the bath. Mrs Ross enters the bathroom and sits beside him. Then, "[h]is thoughts – that had seemed so consecutive and wise a moment before – began to stutter and shuffle to a halt. He sat there blank." (26) Wounded by Rowena's death, by the killing of her rabbits, by his intrusive mother, by his guilt.

In a single sentence, a succinct microversion of the novel. Its style. Its form. Its narrative movement. Stutter. Shuffle. Halt. Blank.

Every autumn, in my classes, on or near November 11, Remembrance Day in Canada, I would read Findley's pivotal stutter narrative to my students. Ross and his men try to shelter in a shell crater. Poison gas envelops them. It is snowing. They must not move. Nor speak. Nor breathe.

> He lifted his gaze to the rim.
>
> Nothing.
>
> He angled his head to the left.
>
> The bird sang.
>
> Robert froze.
>
> There was a German soldier with a pair of binoculars staring right at him.
>
> Robert stared back – unmoving. (128)

Single-sentence paragraphs. One-word sentences. Short simple sentences with no subordinate clauses. Monosyllables. Em dashes. These shape the movement of Findley's poetics of stammer.

You cannot read such spare prose in a hurry. The trauma of a war in which the battle lines never move; of immobility in lung and muscle and vocal chords; the syntax of stop, and stop. You are reading, but as you do, you are feeling that you can't even *bring yourself* to read this.

The narrative keeps stumbling into truncated, undeveloped paragraphs. And stutter and shuffle touch almost every aspect of the varying voices and perspectives in the novel. Consider the first Marian Turner transcript early in the novel. It con-

veys something of the rhythm of colloquial conversation, yet it does not have the oral tags and pro-forms that might fully so mark it (the 'uhhs' and 'yuknows'). That is, it might be read as another record of stutter, with numerous em dashes, and ellipses as if in her uncomfortable laughter Marian is still finding war and hero difficult to describe (16–17).

Repetitions startle, as if a speaker or teller has forgotten she's already said this. Or she can't get some event, some impression, out of her head. "Tick – tick – tick." (45) Endings perplex: "And this was what they called *the wars.*" (70). Eight monosyllables convey conviction. And anger. But the pronoun "this" has no decideable antecedent. The writing, the speaking shuffles "Forward. Back" toward a "sort of glottal stop – halfway to nowhere" (110).

Sentences with no predicates, copula constructions with no movement. Short sentences in periodic structure. Ellipses, dashes, rhetorical questions, parenthetic "(PAUSE)"s (104). Images of stasis (97), breathlessness (94–95), wordlessness (98). Everywhere the signs of silence. Findley maintaining "*that an ordinary human being has a right to be* horrified …" (104).

Maybe the whole novel, its collage, expresses the Big Stammer: those almost random, and often suddenly truncated scraps, quick shifts in point of view, time scheme, tone, narrator. A fragment of narrative, a small slice of journalistic documentary, a partial transcript, a passage of dialogue.

Avoidance

"James likes birds – because they are *all possibility*." (217; my emphasis) James Hunter's plane is shot down in his first sortie, and he spends all of World War II in a German prisoner-of-war camp. He had chosen flying, enlisting in the air force, "'So I don't have to see the people I'm killing.'" (31). In camp, he also chooses flying: while his fellow prisoners dig tunnels, he opts to escape into bird song, into a meticulous minute-by-minute study of redstarts. In the presence of their song, "all his thoughts are silenced" (20).

Sounding this refrain, Canadian novelist Helen Humphreys composes the premise of her novel *The Evening Chorus* (2015). Bird language articulates where writing or speech fails. One of the prisoners is whistling while he tends a small garden. A guard unholsters his Luger, silently walks a few paces and shoots the offender "through the temple" (65). The account of the incident ends abruptly with that phrase; there is nothing to be said; or written. We learn late in the novel that Christoph, the camp Kommandant, was lured to his window by the whistling, "the prisoner's beautiful song;" is "shocked … so deeply that he forgot to breathe for a minute or two" (279).

In such shared speechlessness, German Kommandant, Classics Professor at the University of Berlin, and British prisoner, Grammar School science teacher, find

alliance in the watching of birds. Christoph takes James out of the camp to observe a flock of cedar waxwings, "vagrants or accidentals." He gives James the German word *Seidenschwänze*, telling him "It means 'silken tails.'" (70). Two men, supposedly from opposed armies and nations and social ambitions, possess few words, other than the vague assurance of some consuming dream of possibility – on the wing.

Adrift in Alien Space

I turned to Farley Mowat's *And No Birds Sang* (1979) anticipating that the title theme would be a central motif, and, perhaps, given Mowat's other books, a flight path to environmental concerns. But suggestive title aside, Mowat is content to use the closing stanza of John Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci" (ending "and no birds sing") as one of two opening epigraphs, and then to quote it again when he recounts finding himself accidentally face to face with a German soldier. Instead of firing at one another, the soldiers share a water bottle filled with rum. Rum finished, the German dies grotesquely, his guts spilling out of him onto the floor … (241–242).

Aside from a few passing references to birds, Mowat's account of pre-battle training in England includes a list he has identified from a "newly acquired field guide:" "the Bearded Tit, Chough, Hoopoe, Twite, Chiffchaff, Wryneck, Doteral and Dabchick." (31). His enthusiasm as bird-watcher is scarcely mentioned – unless by its absence it reinforces the title idea. In the midst of a gale and anticipating a grueling battle he writes "It was a time for plants to die, or birds to flee … ." (216). Mowat's epigraph for Part IV, the memoir's shell-shocked closing section, is from Edmund Blunden's "Third Ypres:" "All to the drabness of uncreation sunk,/And all thought dwindled to a moan … ." (n. p.). Again, as violence looms, no song. No words. No mind.

Mowat's account of the Canadian campaign in Italy shifts hurriedly from journalism to an exclusively mental trauma. Mowat quotes from one of his letters home: "'I don't *know* you anymore, I only know the you that was. I wish I could explain the desperate sense of isolation, of not belonging to my own past, of being adrift in some kind of alien space.'" (237). No bird is singing; instead, universal muteness dictates the memoir's stopping without an ending.

Amnesia

How can you write about a person about whom you know nothing, whose story you don't want to know? Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder* (1997) is the exceedingly spare, intricately inarticulate record of daring to find what you don't dare find. *Dora Bruder* is a nonfiction document somehow terrifying in its historical and "topographical precision" (20). Or is it? Maybe it is autobiography, or maybe it is a flirtation with

the purely imagined and imaginary. The prompt is an advertisement from *Paris Soir* 1941, encountered by the Nobel Prize winning author in 1988, a family seeking their missing daughter, Dora Bruder, age 15.

Refuting every apparent factual detail, writer and reader come up against "this blank, this mute block of the unknown" (20). We know, or think we know, that Dora's name appears on a transport list for Auschwitz, 18 September 1942 (43). But that horror is a shadow, a blank. Words are few, book is slim, "chapters" (hardly more than notations) are brief, emotions are blunted, modifiers are scarce. Modiano's inquiry is brilliant, one might even say beautiful: a self-reflexive appeal speaking thinly through a "thick layer of amnesia." The author, the informants, the documents maybe, the history books, the national cultures need to forget, to deny, to mute the unknown of collusion, collaboration, complicity. "You can certainly sense something, an echo, distant, muted, but of what, precisely, it is impossible to say." (109) Such groping might annoy some readers, but as it does so, it surely isolates them in denial.

Still Bravely Singing

The evening chorus in Helen Humphrey's novel rises from a flock of redstarts. In *The Wars*, the nightingales sing at noon (160). According to Paul Fussell, "If the opposite of war is peace, the opposite of experiencing moments of war is proposing moments of pastoral." (Fussell 231). Bird song is the war narrative's necessary pastoral moment. Thus I too escape to trees and birds when the moments of war stifle then choke.

Where war rages, bird song is the dream of flight and future. When bird song is extinguished, "[t]here [is] a strange stillness." A silent spring. Rachel Carson prefaces her revolutionary warning (1962) with a fiction of a town in mid America fallen silent, a whole world traumatized:

> The birds … – where had they gone? … . The few birds seen anywhere were moribund; they trembled violently and could not fly … . On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens … now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods, and marsh. (2)

Instead of voices silenced in the face of trauma, the silencing of *non-human* voices *is* the trauma. (Again Keats on the absence of bird song provides one of her epigraphs.)

The literary critic Cathy Caruth, quoting an interview with Geoffrey Hartman, notes the "resilience of the pastoral moment [in trauma accounts] … [the idea] of rural nature as a shield, as giving some relief, a new chance, or a renewed chance of recovery." "But," Hartman continues, "the Holocaust was so traumatic, so interruptive an event, that … it exists unintegrated alongside normal memories. So that not only is the pastoral interrupted, but you have a juxtaposition that probably can't be resolved." (234–235)

And Then Stop

Trauma, or the traumatic event, is *unspeakable*. We can't, or won't, talk about it, but paradoxically we can't deal with it *without* using language. Current therapeutic practice seeks to coax the client to talk about the experience. Caruth's description of a victim's impeded voice is typical: "the woman really struggled at the beginning to give much of an answer at all. And she would give a few sentences and then stop. And Kati would prod her again, and she would give a few more sentences and stop." (Caruth 248).

Stelae

I will try to begin again. In the summer of 2011, Treva and I travelled to Berlin for the first time. We had places in the city we wanted to see. But we didn't know in advance that we wanted to visit The Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe [Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas]. For some reason, neither of us was aware of such a commemorative installation almost five acres in size. So Berlin's Holocaust Memorial came as a surprise: we wandered south from touring the Reichstag, past the Brandenburg Gate to be abruptly stunned by that symmetrical asymmetrical ordered labyrinthine field of plinths. It at once bewildered, disoriented, and – is it the right word – thrilled me. Still does. My strongest memory of Berlin, of that beautifully memorable city.

The Holocaust Memorial is all of that because it is in a sense a non-memorial. No names. No dates. No honour guard. No images. No icons. No statues. No structures/sculptures atop what I thought were supporting plinths. No flowers. *No language.* And yet, and yet, these rows of reminders of something unspeakable keep insisting the question "what does it mean?" Or maybe also "why?"

Later I encountered the vast, agonized, complicated controversy that surrounds the site: amnesia against remembering; redemption versus responsibility. Richard Brody's discussion of the Memorial in *The New Yorker* (2012) especially disturbed me just because it seemed to have answers. It wanted to shout "how dare they?" Which Jews? Murdered by whom? What about the other persecuted? The documentary candour, frankness, directness of the historical record, here fittingly buried in a museum beneath the site: it's not too obvious, it's not alluring, and in its stammering factuality the Memorial a companion now to too many wars, and *The Wars*.

In *Listening to Trauma*, Caruth further questions Geoffrey Hartman about his reading of video accounts made by Holocaust survivors: "you have … talked about the 'mute eloquence' of the survivors' gestures. The muteness in the gestures suggests that there is a resistance to the telling of these stories beyond the question of skill in writing or speaking, a difficulty linked to the problem of memory and memory

places." (230). The mute eloquence of the memory place – the problematic of that non-memorial.

The Last Instant of Things as They Were

Before the story begins, a pause. Something "screamed." "A target" is mentioned. The reader waits, in some "moment before impact" (Galloway 1). To register the trauma of living in Sarajevo during the Bosnian war, Stephen Galloway depends not so much on suspense, as on narrative *suspended*. The siege of Sarajevo is rendered not so obviously by the stammer, but through an exquisite sense of delay, perhaps a poetics of patience, where deliberateness, even insouciance, in prose style as in narrative, suspends the brutal finality of living always within the sights of randomly moving snipers.

Before *The Cellist of Sarajevo* (2008) begins with a Part 1, a prologue or preface, titled "The Cellist," examines "the last instant of things as they were" (1, 4). That moment carries more trauma than the explosion to follow. In the five pages of that opening section, Galloway repeats the four sentences of his first paragraph three times. Almost exactly, except that the third shifts from past tense to present (6). Either the incident keeps repeating the same horror over and over, or the single event cannot be escaped and keeps forcing itself back into the reluctant brain, into its need to tell. Crucial to the suspending, Galloway deftly avoids the "event," by using an unidentified, unreferenced, *it* as the subject, and a weak expletive to unlocate the impact. *What* split "air and sky?" *Where* is the "target?" What is visible in "the visible world?"

There is a pause and then a Part 2. Sarajevo is the location, as Galloway notes (60), of a murder that begins World War I. And uncertain mythology tells us that the cellist's tribute piece, known as Albinoni's Adagio, originates as a fragment "in the remnants of the firebombed Dresden Music Library" (1). More mythology suggests the piece has J. S. Bach as its primary model.

Living under siege is to live with graphic accounts of horror. A "hatless man's head bursts, the top of his skull evaporating in a fine red drizzle" (136). "They're firing at the ambulances … ." (162) "The man holds the pigeon's body with one hand and, with the other, twists its neck until it breaks. Then he cuts the bird's body loose and places it in a bag beside him." (65) The story of such horrors is the story of speech inhibited (42–43). It's a story of evasion. "[T]he men on the hills. … would. … like to kill them all but, if they can't, they would like to make them *forget how they used to be*, how civilized people act." (90; my emphasis)

This awareness, on the cusp of horror and nothingness, permeates the shadowed daily acts of simple help and caring. Indeed, such moments often come without awareness or deliberation, as if automatic. And the most stunning of these is emo-

tional and psychic, rather than pragmatically going for water or sharing food. The cellist (no name) in "dusty tuxedo" (74) sits on a stool in a shell crater in the middle of the street, exposed, and plays Albinoni's Adagio, for 22 days, one for each person killed by a mortar while lining up to buy bread. The "music lift[s] off the street. … A heavy, slow kind of sad, the sort that does not bring you to tears but makes you feel like crying" (153). A sniper, down in the city from the hills, has the cellist in his sights, but – captivated by the music – cannot shoot. Arrow, the opposing sniper, however, pulls her trigger almost involuntarily (154). Arrow is the sniper besieged; the unnamed man from the hills is the besieger. But it does not matter which is which. As in *The Wars*, enemy and civilized human are indistinguishable. As with the unreferenced *it* at the pre-beginning of the novel, the antagonists are never identified by ethnicity or religion or 'nationality,' by ideology or even by reductive nicknames (cf. gook).

The commonplace universality of the wars. The refusal to admit. The trauma of the disappeared, the not said, the unmeaning.

Renzuru (Conjoined Cranes)

I could begin on the spiral walkway in Hiroshima's Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims descending tentatively toward an almost bare circular space of quiet contemplation. The nearby Museum with its blasted memorabilia – a rusting child's trike, a half-burnt schoolbook, the shadow of a vaporized body on stone steps – is gut-wrenching. I am gulping and gulping again.

But the tears came at the Children's Peace Monument, where, on a bright November morning, classes of school children are queuing up, one after another, to pray for and pledge themselves to peace. These group tributes must go on all day, every day. At the culmination of each short ceremony, the children move forward to present the origami cranes they have folded, an affirmation of their commitment to peace. How many strings of 1000 cranes must there be at this site? From how many countries? And the staff at the park must have to move some out every day.

I don't know how much or how cranes sing. But the bird rules here.

The Peace Park is as memorable as Berlin's Holocaust Memorial. But Berlin's upended stone coffins in their unmeaning starkness are more traumatic maybe. The Peace Memorial Park is a *garden*; the monuments are part of a *garden*. And the message of those conjoined cranes is positive and *yes* and future and moving in that different way that hope seems desperate and necessary.

In Hiroshima, the *exact* location of the hypocenter (the specific point on the earth's surface over which the bomb exploded) is a prominent theme. A visitor encounters a repeated insistence on the importance of measurement, distance, location: any tree, building, artefact that survived the blast is located by precise figures

on how far, as if in some bizarre way the scrupulously precise physics that created an A-bomb is mimicked in its attempted remembering.

One Long Note Descending

"One by one" Robert's men climb to the rim of the shell crater. The lone German soldier watches them. Now only Robert remains. And then, almost involuntarily, mistakenly, Robert shoots the silently solitary enemy watcher:

> Something exploded. The German gave a startled cry and was suddenly
> dead, with his arms dangling down. (130)
> Ross moves like an automaton, unaware, baffled. Nothing but a vague "something." "He wanted to know what had happened;"
> He raised his field glasses and the first thing he saw was their
> counterpart lying in the mud about a foot from the young man's hand.
> Binoculars. He had only been reaching for his binoculars.
> Robert sagged against the ground. It was even worse than that. Lying beside the German was a modified Mauser rifle of the kind used by snipers. He could have killed them all.
> Surely that had been his intention. But he'd relented. Why?
> The bird sang.
> One long note descending: three that wavered on the brink of
> sadness.
> That was why.
> It sang and sang and sang, till Robert rose and walked away. The sound
> of it would haunt him to the day he died. (131)

In so far as the *why* has an answer, it lies in the descending, wavering song of a single bird. (The haunting is reinforced by another stammer: the lines describing the bird song are repeated from earlier in the scene (127); now context shifts from hiding to haunting.) These terse monosyllabic paragraphs, wavering on the brink of the extended silences between each of them, are for me some of the most powerful in English Canadian writing.

I used to read them for the symbolic hopefulness, the reminder of an alternative to war and violence – the larks still bravely singing fly. But returning to them in the Spring of 2016, I hear Findley the early, nascent environmentalist. The bird – it might be a white-throated sparrow – ties soldier and song together in an ecology of life forms. Equivalent life-forms, all miraculously alive, all interdependent, all necessary to one another. The German sniper, hearing the bird, senses a more than human ecology. He might be a birdwatcher, reaching for his binoculars. To see up close. To see more detail, more clearly.

I sense that Findley is writing *against* the silencing so many writers have found so tersely stirred in the Keats poem. "[L]arks fly up in endless song." (140) The novel

records Kaiser Wilhelm, in Berlin, Unter den Linden, rousing his troops before they leave for battle: "The sky was full of birds … ." (47). The bugler, Willie Poole, thinks the noises in the fog might be birds. Robert counters "I'd be very surprised if any birds had survived in this place." (75). At once, "something flew out of the ditch" (75) defining the surprise that flies through the crater scene, and the entire novel. I count at least thirty birds; undoubtedly I have missed some. Until, unseen, we hear them in the dark in the book's penultimate paragraph, where they prompt a final pause to think about breathing (191).

But when you think about the environmentalist Findley in *The Wars*, you will quickly remember that the wars are populated, too, with coyotes and monkey; toad and rattlesnake; hedgehogs and frogs and dogs and mice. And rabbits, always rabbits. And then especially horses – the life form Robert must save above all. There, yes, you recognize how profoundly that web of connected life forms in one long note descending at the lip of the shell crater shapes his subsequent action and commitment. And Pegasus, of course, is a horse that is also a bird, carrier of thunder and lightning.

The bird song perhaps pushes Robert toward hope, the dream of an equitable shared life for all, meaning for all animals.

Owls and Wolves

Tracking Findley's narrator, who, in his search for Ross, is prone to unexpected and abrupt turns (15), I shift now to introduce Tom Longboat, whose importance in Ross's story is to obscure a national trauma. Longboat is Onandaga, an escapee from Residential School, and a dispatch runner in World War I. Longboat is Robert's hero – in part because, as a marathoner, he represents the dream of running away. (93) Robert "wish[ed] that he was red." Maybe more crucially, Longboat is a model of silence (48).

For Longboat, like Robert, there are things you can't talk about. In the crater scene, just after we first hear the white-throat sparrow, and before Robert kills the apparently compassionate sniper, Longboat's people and language sound in Robert's head: "The bird had made him extremely nervous. *Rob the Ranger* always whistled like a white-throat if he saw an Indian moving in the woods. And the Indians hooted like owls and howled and barked and yipped like wolves." (127). This is a mind at once stereotyping and appreciating. At once knowing and silenced by the knowing. This trauma.

At a conference in Victoria BC in November 2015, Kathleen Mahoney told us that the divide between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples is deepening – that the trauma of native peoples is also the trauma, the moral failure, of all Canadians. Longboat looks like an incidental parenthesis in *The Wars* until he isn't. A whole

other trauma, beyond mechanized war, Holocaust, and A-Bomb, that may be an add-on but shouldn't be. Which is how I now see it in Findley.

I could discuss another novel here, by Joseph Boyden or Thomas King. But maybe *not* turning to more lit crit is more honest or valid. Longboat's hidden story marks a trauma so traumatic that it is generally not recognized or acknowledged by the settler population. I think if you asked a German or a Japanese or a Cambodian what the "national trauma" is, you would get from almost everyone one answer (or maybe in Japan, two or three). But in Canada? The ignorance of the trauma, means it is not a case of not finding a voice or language in which to heal. But a blanket unawareness that never *requires* us to *try*. Embedded in this ignorance is an ironic inversion of both stammer and song. The aboriginal peoples are losing scores, maybe hundreds, of their *languages* and hence of the thought systems and unique perceptions implicit in those languages.

So beyond the inability to speak (or write) or for the brain to think-process internally in the face of trauma, the very mechanism and system of speech is absent. They, and we, have lost our tongues.

Beach of Words

> I d-d-don't d-don't want to t-t-talk about this.
> N-n … n-no. I can't.
> Robert's "mind went stumbling over a beach of words and picked them up like stones and threw them around inside his head but none of them fell in his mouth. Why?" (168)

Bird Song

Perhaps my own career-long inclination to write about landscapes, trees and shrubs, is itself evidence of traumatized speechlessness. I don't want to read that novel because I have heard it's about incest or mass shooting.

Even the word trauma registers avoidance. In contemporary culture its adjective form, like tragic and iconic, hovers on the edge of the hackneyed, and cliché. I suppose the very tiredness of such terms is sign of stammer; every time a suicide bomber kills 32 people [Brussels], or a semi-automatic rifle blasts apart a schoolroom, we say there are no words for this. It is easier to find a fresh language to convey the intricate blossoming of the yellow sand verbena, than the ungrowing of a suddenly dead 12-year-old.

Note

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Stutter Gloss

Rather than a linear, and numerically connected set of footnotes and appendices, I append here a random and oblique set of supplements and extensions, a stutter gloss for a mind stammering.

Gloss
From Greek *glossa*, tongue, language.

Blues
But I shot a man in Reno …
Just to watch him die.
Johnny Cash "Folsom Prison Blues"

Adventure
Robert Ross's childhood reading includes *Rob the Ranger: A Story of the Fight for Canada* by Herbert Strang (pseud) 1907. This boy's adventure yarn is set during the battle between French and British for control of Canada.

Repetition
Repetition will not in itself register trauma. It might signal lack of imagination, or, in the case of song/music, be a means to transcendence, transformation, or dream. Repetition as symptom of trauma will likely reflect a speaker who can't help herself. Such repetition shows the lack of ability to say anything else, anything more, anything different. In an article on Icelandic theatre artist Ragnar Kjartansson, Calvin Tomkins remarks on the suspended contradiction: "With repetition, narrative hinges like songs, concerts, or operas can lose their traditional form and become static – but vibrant, like paintings or sculptures." Calvin Tomkins. "Play it Again," *The New Yorker.* 11 April, 2016: 29.

Stele
Noun. Botany. The central core of the stem and root of a vascular plant, consisting of the vascular tissue (xylem and phloem) and associated supporting tissue. From Latin *stare* to stand.

Memory
In a review of a Doris Salcedo retrospective at the Guggenheim, in New York City we read that "the Holocaust Memorial close by the site of Hitler's bunker in Berlin reflects the urgent task of simultaneously obliterating and remembering," *The Economist.* 11 July, 2015: 77.

Environmentalism
In conversation, Sherrill Grace, who is soon to complete Timothy Findley's biography, insisted that Findley's "passion for," even "obsession with" the natural environment has not been sufficiently recognized nor celebrated. Sherrill mentioned, in particular, the use of the term "Holocaust" in *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (1966) and the outrage that followed Findley's associating oil and gas pollution with "terrorism." Findley, at the time writer-in-residence at the University of Calgary, was delivering the Bob Edwards Luncheon address at the Palliser Hotel (Blakey). Sherrill tells me that the most extensive and detailed evidence is to be found in the author's journals,

where he kept, for example, records of migratory bird arrivals at his farm, Stone Orchard, and details of their appearance and habit.

Hiding
In his essay on Kafka entitled "K" in *Language and Silence* (1967), George Steiner insists that "The world of Auschwitz lies outside speech as it lies outside reason. To speak of the *unspeakable* is to risk the survivance of language as creator and bearer of humane, rational truth. Words that are saturated with lies or atrocity do not easily resume life." (146). Steiner's observation on Kafka's ambiguous view of literature is also obviously relevant to the central trope of my paper: "His diffidence evokes the Old Testament motif of the stammerers afflicted with God's message, of the seers seeking to hide from the presence and exactions of the word." (145).

Boys' Own
References to "scalps" (12), and "headdress" (14) early in *The Wars* remind how the crude adventure story figures as background to the problematic adventurism (The war will be over in six weeks. Etc.) prominent in the culture of the wars (cf in Germany the great popularity of the works of Karl May).

Undecided
haesitantia LL a stammering

Timing
Three time schemes overlap to introduce Galloway's cellist: a historical past, an authorial present, a speculative future. The reader is drawn into the trauma vortex, knowing that some catastrophe is sure to happen, but not knowing when or where. And then doubting the knowing itself, wondering even *if*. Framing in intersecting and blurring time schemes is a complementary, frightened, tactic of delay (1–6).

Stop
W. H. New reminded me of another option to stopping into silence: the traumatized stop themselves by turning to another topic. In Jack Hodgins's novel *Broken Ground* (1998) the returned soldiers refuse to speak of their experience in World War I, not by choosing silence, but by relishing the story of a threatening forest fire. The reader knows it's the war they are reliving. They deflect the horror of war into a sometimes comic anecdote. Yet, too, the stumble persists, the story breaking up into the "noises" of Donald expressed in "talk that made no language sense" (332).

Essay
To try. The Berlin memorial might provide an image for my "form." A series of stelae of the same two dimensions, but differing lengths and intrusiveness.

Economy
German marks are the precious currency in Galloway's Sarajevo.

Mute
Perhaps the most traumatic aspect of Farley Mowat's memoir is not the descriptions of mutilated bodies, intense noise, and bloody awful weather. A disturbing narrative structure moves almost too deliberately from adventure and thrill of battle through the violence of "steel and flame" to the "euphemisms" of "'battle fatigue'" and "'shell shock'" (230). That is, an account of the Canadian campaign in Italy more or less journalistic with occasional capital L literary turns, shifts hurriedly toward a purely, exclusively mental trauma. To convey his own trauma he uses the images of "a disembodied spirit" and a "mutiny within – by the withdrawal of sensation" (244). This move toward a universal muteness dictates the memoir's stopping without an ending: the death of his immediate commander in a wild gesture of reckless heroism, on Christmas day, and the author wondering for whom he might be weeping (250).

Hope
Strings sing to the touch of a bow in *The Cellist of Sarajevo* (7).

Stubborn
Ostinato (Italian: "obstinate") plural *ostinatos*, or *ostinati*: in music, short melodic phrase repeated throughout a composition, sometimes slightly varied or transposed to a different pitch. A rhythmic ostinato is a short, constantly repeated rhythmic pattern.

Un-naming
Chapters in *The Cellist of Sarajevo* carry titles designating three principal characters, and hence several chapters are named for each. But "The Cellist," unnamed, is recognized in but one chapter, the first, which precedes Part One. It is as if the title character given up to his trauma is obliterated before the narrative begins.

Birding
Gene Walz, Professor of Film Studies at the University of Manitoba, and a lifelong birder, told me that the song of the Redstart is very similar to that of the White-throated Sparrow.

Beyond Processing?

Africa and Agents of Trauma in *Disgrace*, *Hundert Tage*, and *Beasts of No Nation*

Markus M. Müller

Introduction

Africa, evolutionary science tells us, is the cradle of the human species. In its long, eventful history of emerging and vanishing tribes, cultures, and socio-political entities, the Dark Continent has been shaped by many internal and external, often imperialistic, forces. The Romans conquered Northern Africa in 30 BC, followed by the Arabs in the 7th century, launching the spread of Islam in West and East Africa; after the Middle Ages, the European powers arrived to colonize, and Christianize, the continent: Already before Britannia's 'glorious rule', this process rendered Africa "a porno-tropics for the European imagination – a fantastic magic lantern of the mind onto which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears" (McClintock 22). If this is one way of misrepresenting and (at least imaginatively) abusing Africa, the "pervasive Western kind of one-dimensional engagement with Africa runs the risk of flattening the perception of Africa into a single narrative of war, corruption and devastation" (Bisschoff and van de Peer 5). These reductive representations aside, the long colonial period and its difficult aftermath have produced what Antonio Gramsci terms "a great diversity of morbid symptoms" (Gramsci 276; qtd. in Amoko 207). With official independence and respective nation-building happening for most states in and beyond the 1960s, "African worlds [appear] as societies in uncertain transition" (207). Colonial legacy and political mismanagement, dictatorships, ongoing inter-tribal and other warfares, hunger, natural catastrophes, recurring epidemics, genital clipping and other culturally inscribed violations of African females, and often ill-directed international/'humanitarian' interventions add up intensely to "the dilemmas of the post-independence situation" (Irele 10). It is thus not suprising that, "according to the World Health Organization report in 2005, Africa is the world's foremost locus for the experience of trauma … . The continent has a history of traumatic events impacting mass population, and at present it is viewed as having the largest number of new traumatic events each year." (Gilkey and Kaijage 16).[1] 'Trauma', with its Greek etymology pointing to a physical wound, has come to designate primarily psychic states, which Kirby Farrell calls "psychocultural" matter, an injury that "demands to be interpreted and, if possible, integrated into character" (7). Dominick LaCapra describes trauma as a "disruptive experience

that disarticulates the self and creates holes in existence; it has belated effects that are controlled only with difficulty and perhaps never fully mastered" (41). Trauma is consciously registered and experienced by the affected person/collectivity only after its actual onset, and implies the experience of the past and future "through a profound discontinuity" (Caruth 14).

The current boom in trauma studies not only reflects growing concerns about the nexus of representation, ethics, acts of recall, of forms of treatment, political diagnosis and reconciliation; it also projects, with reference to trauma narratives, "an essential apparatus for understanding 'the real world' and … even a potential means for changing it for the better" (Craps 45). In relation to these characteristics of trauma and potential functions of its encoding in literature, the following three con/texts have been selected, from inside and outside perspectives: pan-African boy soldierhood in *Beasts of No Nation* (2005) by Uzudinma Iweala, an American Yale-graduate of Nigerian descent; calculated genocide and the failure of humanitarian agencies in Rwanda in *Hundert Tage*/*One Hundred Days* (2008), the first novel by Swiss dramatist Lukas Bärfuss; and two interracial rape scenarios plus post-apartheid reorientation in *Disgrace* (1999) by J.M. Coetzee, a white South African writer of Dutch background. As the authors address and unveil mechanisms of traumatizing behavior and cultural violence, they (make us) reflect upon the agents or triggers, instigators, and sources of trauma as well as its potential processing. To varying degrees, they involve the readers in actively – if not empathically – investigating the characters' victimization, suffering, and eventual coping strategies, maybe making us a part of their history. And "history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas" (Caruth 24).

Disgrace

With the background of South Africa's difficult task of trying to transcend centuries of colonial rule and decades of apartheid, after its official end in 1994, Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* implicates its major characters as subjects and agents of trauma; the protagonist, in fact, is both. With its focus on "two variants of inter-racial rape" (Franssen 240), the book "calls the reader to activate his/her own matrix of contexts in order to understand rape, whether that rubric is formulated as a reasoned political position or a loose body of unacknowledged, perhaps unexamined, beliefs" (Middleton and Townsend 118). All this implies "expos[ing] the workings of racist ideologies and their inextricable link to gender" (Mardrossian 73). In the first rape scenario, the disillusioned, divorced, fifty-two-year-old white academic David Lurie sexually violates one of his students, Melanie Isaacs. This is presented from the perpetrator's perspective, in a narrative style through which "readers are made complicit with an economy that obscures his [Lurie's] responsibility by focusing on the victim's"

(Mardrossian 79). While Lurie thinks about his transgression as "[n]ot rape, not quite that, but undesired nonetheless" (Coetzee 25), Melanie reports to the university. In the ensuing Hearing Committee, he reluctantly offers a mock-confession, calling himself "a servant of Eros," and refuses to give a ready-made public apology that would express a "spirit of repentance" – arguing that he does not believe in lying when he "may not be sincere" (52, 58). Lurie denies his traumatizing impact.

As critics stress, Lurie's hearing – and his refusal to call rape "rape" – is a parody of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was in operation from 1996–1998, seeking to effect a processing of apartheid's atrocious past, and to grant amnesty to those human rights violators who would publicly confess to their crimes. While Rosalind Morris sees "a valorization and institutionalization of narrative testimony … for addressing and redressing collective traumas" (390), Rosen points out how often "[t]ruth is fashioned by [those] victims" that were (secret) perpetrators, and, quoting Susan Shepler, refers to a "'discourse of abdicated responsibility'" (304). This in mind, Anne McElvoy calls *Disgrace* a "mirror to the fate of a country locked into required rituals of self-examination, but unable to find true repentance or comfort in the process" (29; qtd. in Segall 49). This tension is played out in the novel's complex allegorical dimensions, with Lurie's violation of Melanie – whom he calls "the dark one" – echoing "'the white peril', the hidden sexual exploitation of black women by white men that has existed for centuries" (Plaatje 283; qtd. in Graham 437). In South Africa's changing political climate, with the black population coming into power democratically, living in Capetown no longer fits the now unemployed David.

The self-exiling perpetrator drives to his daughter Lucy's farm in the Eastern Cape, intending to stay for a while, seeking reorientation. A few days into his visit, Lucy is gang-raped by three black men, while David is locked up and set fire upon in the washroom. In spite of his rage at what has happened, his daughter refuses to report or talk about the rape. She instructs her father, who insists on filing some complaint with the police: "You tell what happened to you, I tell what happened to me." (99). Pressed again later to tell more, she refuses again and paradoxically says: "The whole story is what I have told." (110). Lucy's silence is a typical coping mechanism in trauma: "Survivors of … sexual crimes silence themselves and are silenced because it is too difficult to tell and to listen." (Kohler Riessman 3). Kimberly Segall, reflecting the perspective of the irritated father who wants his daughter to speak in order to recuperate, reasons that "Lucy will remain in this deadened state as long as there is silence about the past" (51) – and that implies that he wants the crime to be made public to satisfy his desire for retribution. Thus, the book's second violation scene, in which David has his head severely burned and is traumatically wounded, reveals a double standard: "That he identifies his daughter's violation as rape while being unable to recognize his own act as such exposes his sexism as well as his racism." (Mardrossian 80). Moreover, Lucy suggests that the ultimate instiga-

tor behind the violence and hatred she experienced during the rape was the history of apartheid – "a history she needed to accept" (156). Her sense of resignation, or acquiescence, both confronts and connects with his view of the new power relations in South Africa leading to more trouble and an increase of "sexual violence committed by blacks towards whites" – the "white population's fear" known as "black peril" (Graham 434). "[T]hrough the second rape Coetzee retroactively exposes the masculinist and racist bias through which the first one is represented and naturalized." (Mardrossian 80)

If the rapes of Melanie and Lucy, with their respective elisions and silences, are allegories of the history of violation upon women that were collectively silenced during apartheid and its aftermath, then the book's major male black figures, with their evocative names, could fulfil similar functions. Pollux, the youngest of the three black rapists, a "disturbed child," is particularly loathed by David because he remains present on site, sheltered by Lucy's farm hand, Petrus. When David "notices the boy … peeping at Lucy" in the bathroom, he feels an unprecedented "elemental rage" and gives him "a good, solid kick" (206–207). David's reaction reflects his "colonial attitude" (Liena 57), connected to his frustration over seeing his daughter's impregnator and being reminded of his own impotence in not having prevented the crime. On another level his rage is intensified by the fact that deep down inside, David half-consciously intuits – and would like to reject – the connection between himself and his racial other; he is like the twin of the mythological Pollux, Castor: Both men are rapists; both must be educated about the new South Africa; both spy on their victims (Lurie attended one of Melanie's amateur theatre performances); and both despise the other respectively as perpetrator and oppressor (cf. Shattuck 141–143). In spite of "their … crimes, Coetzee insists that we must also recognize that they have both been shaped by the legacy of South Africa's history, a birthright of racism and violence that remains" (145).

Petrus, the other major black character in *Disgrace*, is Lucy's 'gardener' who has been helping her substantially but shows irritating calmness or indifference after she has been raped. Could he have engineered the violation and its outcome? Petrus is the book's enigma of evasion and transition, as he cleverly manages to expand his farm-based household, first becomes co-owner, and then offers marriage – as a purely protective gesture – to the child-bearing Lucy in exchange for full farm control, excluding her own house. Thus, her "child [of mixed background] becomes part of his family" (204), to which Pollux (one of the potential fathers) also belongs, as son of Petrus' second wife. These constellations of the new social-political family, with Lucy's explicit surrender of her land and "subjugation" (159) to South Africa's new rulers as a kind of penance for past ills, and with the rapist protected by the black family, irritated many readers and prompted critical outcries *en masse*.[2] Other critics suspect that such reactions might have been calculated by Coetzee, always making his books a challenging read. Basically, they reason that both David's and

Pollux's violations and their outcomes function as mutual elucidations of the different discursive treatments and weightings of the same transgression – rape; "the critical attention paid to black on white sexual violence in the charged context of post-apartheid South Africa masks its link to the similar forms of more or less naturalized violence perpetuated in white liberal contexts" (Mardrossian 80). Thus cautioned to reevaluate our ideological assumptions, we seem invited allegorically to project a provocative, though not impossible, development: If the two raping twins Pollux and Lurie, attached to the old order, have yet to find their grounds in the transitional post-apartheid period, the new order and future of South Africa would be embodied by Lucy, who will literally give birth to the next generation, and Petrus, whose Christian name (Peter) is associated with the foundation of the church or of a belief system. Beyond a positivist interpretation, though, alongside the old agents of violence and trauma, we now have "subjects [who] engage in retributive acts against those who have traditionally occupied power" (Thomas 232). *Disgrace* indicates the shifting, (cross-racial) inversion, and perpetuation of traumatizing agencies.

Hundert Tage/One Hundred Days

To preface the discussion of *Hundert Tage*/*One Hundred Days*, here is a preface:

> I did try to write this story soon after I came back from Rwanda in September 1994, hoping to find some respite for myself in sorting out how my own role as Force Commander of UNAMIR interconnected with the international apathy, the complex political manoeuvres, the deep well of hatred and barbarity that resulted in a genocide in which over 800,000 people lost their lives. Instead, I plunged into a disastrous mental health spiral that led me to suicide attempts, a medical release from the Armed Forces, the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, and dozens upon dozens of therapy sessions and extensive medication, which still have a place in my daily life.
>
> It took me seven years to finally have the desire, the willpower and the stamina to begin to describe in detail the events of that year in Rwanda. To recount, from my insider's point of view, how a country moved from the promise of a certain peace to intrigue, the fomenting of racial hatred, assassinations, civil war and genocide. And how the international community, through an inept UN mandate and what can only be described as indifference, self-interest and racism, aided and abetted these crimes against humanity – how we all helped create the mess that has murdered and displaced millions and destabilized the whole central African region. (Dallaire 5)

These lines introduce a 'factual' account of a person whose helpless witnessing of the systematic genocide in Rwanda has severely traumatized him – and affected many of those around him. The source is Canadian Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, whose book *Shake Hands with the Devil. The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (2003) became a bestseller. Along with detailing his massive trauma and suicidal tenden-

cies, and before taking the readers into the Rwandan nightmare, Dallaire reports the tragic story of "this book's shadow author," Sian Cansfield, whose intensive research on the subject had taken such a toll that he "sent her on leave for a long weekend to rest … and recharge her batteries" (xvi), but she committed suicide instead. The book we read was not abandoned then but finished as a "tribute" to Sian and her "spirit" (xvi).

No matter where trauma originates, it is difficult to address and diagnose, let alone heal. Dallaire, in contrast to his assistant, has survived, primarily maybe because of the conscious attempt to process his trauma through telling and explaining to a larger audience. Lukas Bärfuss's fictional treatment called *Hundert Tage* works with a similar approach of an outsider speaking from the inside, but only with an audience of one, a nameless former friend from school who listens to David Hohl.[3] *One Hundred Days*, in spite of a few technical flaws and a certain lack of character depth, merits much more critical attention – as a debate on the representatively complicit Swiss developmental aid before and during the hundred days of genocide (April to July 1994) and a narrative of/as trauma.

The very first paragraph identifies David Hohl as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a state that "reflects the direct imposition on the mind of the unavoidable reality of horrific events, the taking over of the mind, psychically and neurobiologically, by an event that it cannot control" (Caruth 58). Hohl is "a broken man" afraid of losing his balance, seems shattered, talks a lot while obviously hiding more, and frequently stops in mid-sentence, "because he has no words for his remembrance, has not found them yet and likely does not want to find them [weil er keine Worte dafür hat, sie noch nicht gefunden hat und wohl auch nicht finden will]" (5). The symptoms of a past experience that is inaccessible and repressed while seeking reconstruction through narration are reflected here. Hohl, who has decidedly moved into the remote Swiss Jura region, away from cities and civilization, needs at least one human being in order to process his PTSD. "In telling first-person trauma to a suitable listener, the survivor is, at the same time and once again, a second person dependent on the listener in order to return to personhood." (Brison 41) This constellation becomes complicated when the listener or frame narrator simply withdraws as soon as the narrative transitions to the teller's/protagonist's past in Rwanda and now operates from a third-person perspective. Carlotta von Maltzan reads this 'anomaly' as a productive effect, with the reader taking over the position of direct listener and, as such, a witness to the report (cf. 136) – to its actualization as potentially cathartic. The chronology of Hohl's retrospective account is repeatedly disrupted, mimicking the difficult and fragmentary, successive reconstruction of psychic content suppressed in traumatization through time.

At the centre, there is David's gradually grasping that both the international institutions and he himself did play more than the role of innocent supporters in Rwanda: After his arrival in Kigali in 1990 as a member of the Swiss Agency for

Development and Cooperation, the idealistic-naïve Swiss citizen begins to glimpse that most of "the Agency's aid and efforts are directed into the channels of the local political structures and are therefore helping to maintain a dictatorial racist power" ("Bärfuss"). Though he and the Agency see the signs of a changing atmosphere, they continue believing in their good work for what they call "Africa's Switzerland" (178) – not just because of the hills and cows, but also because they have instilled Swiss-like discipline, determination, and efficient administering in Rwanda. When the boiling tensions accelerate into the new complexity of a large-scale and systematic mass murder overlapping with civil war, they all flee the country, except for David, who decides to stay and hide in his house. In isolation, he survives the hundred days, occasionally receiving radio propaganda for exterminating the Tutsis; in his later trauma narrative, the Agency's self-serving desire to augment their view of themselves as empathetic benefactors is revealed as fatal – by fulfilling the Rwandan demands for new roads, electricity, educational equipment and radio technology, the Swiss have ultimately provided the local politicians and institutions with an infrastructure that greatly facilitates the carefully planned assaults: "Well, to instruct them in the art of genocide was not our purpose. It was certainly not our responsibility that they turned the radio into an instrument of murder, but somehow I can't quite help feeling that I am listening to a very successful project of the Agency. [Gut, es war nicht unsere Absicht gewesen, die Völkermörder das Handwerk zu lehren. Es war gewiss nicht unsere Schuld, wenn sie das Radio zu einem Mordinstrument machten, aber irgendwie werde ich trotzdem nie das Gefühl los, einem sehr erfolgreichen Projekt der Direktion zu lauschen.]" (125; cf. 142). David diagnoses the guilt inherent in complicity; his narrative exposes the nexus of agencies involved in preparing and performing the genocide – and 'peaceful' African institutions like the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) are among the agents of trauma.

This humanitarian nightmare had strong roots in the colonial history of Rwanda, which belonged to the former German East Africa until 1916, when the Belgians took over.[4] The Germans had created racially motivated classifications among the three major ethnic groups, the Tutsis or 'long ones' (as farmers), Hutus or 'short ones' (as cattle breeders), and Twas or pygmies (as hunter-gatherers). The Belgians intensified colonial rule and ideological division by counting the population, classifying Tutsis as those having more than ten cattle, Hutus as having less than ten, and Twas none; this arbitrary system of imposing ethnic belonging was the basis of the new identity cards introduced in 1939. Like the Germans before them, the Belgians favoured the minority Tutsis as "black Europeans." The resulting "tendency of the few to oppress the many creat[ed] a legacy of tension that exploded into violence" even before Rwandan independence in 1962, after a victorious Hutu revolution. Ethnic tensions never ceased until the catastrophic moment on 06 April 1994, when long-term President Juvenal Habyarimana, a moderate Hutu, died in a plane that was shot to prevent an impending agreement with the Tutsi-based Rwandese Patriotic

Front (RPF) in exile. The genocidal machinery took up its work within an hour of the plane crash. During the hundred days of the mass killings, some 800,000 people were slaughtered, with the governing Hutus massacring 75% of all Tutsis living in Rwanda; the return of the RPF meant an additional civil war and, as result of their gaining control by early July, a mass exodus of about two million people, mostly Hutus, to refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

As simple as this summary of politically maneuvered ethnic tensions leading to large-scale traumatization may sound, it does suggest forcefully that the question of who is part of the chain of responsibility points to the European colonial powers as originary agents of trauma. "Many … genocidal conflicts are particularly a phenomenon of the plural or divided society, in which division persists between peoples of different race or ethnic group or religion, who have been brought together in the same political unit. Colonization … has been a great creator of plural societies, [leading to genocide]." (Kuper 52) Leo Kuper further stresses how the "elaborations of denigrating and justifying ideologies," (68) instilled by the colonial powers, are central to the genesis of genocide in post-colonial times and can thus be seen as a continuation of colonial practice (e. g. the institutionalizing of ethnic difference) with slightly different means.

Author Bärfuss uses his characters to allegorize these power relations and historical implications. Playing with the topos of the black African woman being conquered by the white European colonizer, he lets David lust after the beautiful but detached Agatha.[5] His sexual infatuation becomes so strong that David does not interfere when the Hutu Agatha humiliates the Tutsi housekeeper, Erneste; instead, he is aroused by her power and admits: "I had never desired Agatha as intensely as in this moment. [Und ich begehrte Agathe nie so sehr wie in diesem Augenblick.]" (135). While musing on his lust to more violently subjugate her, though, the text encodes a reversal of the conquest allegory when Agatha falsely attributes a colonialist past to the Swiss people: "You might have colonized our country, … but I will not have you colonize my body. [Ihr habt vielleicht unser Land kolonisiert, … aber ich werde nicht zulassen, dass du meinen Körper kolonialisierst.]" (133). Ultimately, this woman withdraws, becomes inaccessible, and radicalizes herself politically; by applying what the West has provided and taught her, she agitates and leads a killer gang. If his relationship with Agatha mirrors that between Europe and Africa, then David realizes only much later how much he has misread (t)his object of desire *and* his own motivations.

In a similarly allegorical relationship, David turns from sympathetic employer into a dependent critic and finally facilitator of execution: While in hiding, he needs Théoneste, his gardener, to provide fresh water; upon realizing that Théoneste has been hunting and killing Tutsis, David beats him severely. When the Hutu Théoneste returns after a break, and his having killed the Tutsi housekeeper becomes obvious to the protagonist, David administers what he calls "the force of destiny [die Macht des

Schicksals]" (193) in a scene in which a young gang of RPF militia have just entered the grounds and ask to see the gardener-turned-butcher's ID card: David does not let on that he has just seen the card slip out of Théoneste's pocket – and having no identification to verify one's ethnic-political status means certain death. In fact, he has been counting on the militia to show up and consciously feeding Théoneste whiskey in order to have him taken care of, speaking of "a just punishment for his murder of Erneste [die verdiente Strafe für seinen Mord an Erneste]" (176 f.; 191–195).

If the cases of both Agatha and Théoneste symbolize the gradual corruption of recipients of developmental aid, Bärfuss adds a third relationship: David has saved an injured buzzard from Théoneste, and pays an old man to deliver dog cadavers in order to restore the bird. Many lives are sacrificed for the sake of one – but when David sees the bird of prey holding a human thumb in his beak, he quickly beheads it. The observable pattern here of engineering more closeness leading to increasing detachment, James Ikobwa reasons, could reflect the logics of interaction between the Swiss Agency and Rwanda (see 306). More importantly, the three cases of two humans and one animal demonstrate progressively how and that the Swiss idealist Hohl is surprisingly capable of actively administering violence: in the contexts of sexuality, of a heightened desire for morally justified retribution, and of a dim understanding of misguided as well as misinterpreted motivations.

It is these and other aspects of his Rwandan experience David then seeks to come to terms with. "In trauma," Caruth says, "the outside has gone in without any mediation" (59). In *Hundert Tage*, much has gone into David, psychically, and into the physical shelter that somehow corresponds to its inhabitant. The main location of his witnessing of and partial participation in the genocide is his House Amsar, a site where agents of trauma meet and produce future memory, while David begins his tentative, superficial analysis of the events surrounding him as he survives his hundred days.[6] The isolation of this microcosmic location (housing the interaction between victims, perpetrators, and witnesses in the genocide; cf. Ikobwa 294) connects the inner narrative with his new Swiss Jura home in the frame, years later, with its identification of his trauma narrative's constant intrusions from the past. "[T]he painful repetition of the flashback can only be understood as the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasurable event that has not been given psychic meaning in any way." (Caruth 59) With its listener indicating the possibility of a therapeutic talking cure, the Swiss home is Hohl's present-day outpost or frontier of self-recalibration; engulfed by the falling snow – symbolically evocative as, e. g., cover or blanket, means of erasure as well as purification – it allows for meaning-constituting acts of recall. It functions as potentially enabling site of de-traumatization.

Beasts of No Nation

The title, *Beasts of No Nation*, Allison Mackey argues, could be read in two ways – referring to "a generic African nation" (and thus corresponding to generalizing Western assumptions), and, because it is also the title of a song by musical pioneer and political activist Fela Kuti[7] (1938–1997), "implicat[ing] a larger web of responsibility in the face of human rights horrors that span vast global networks" (108). "I relied heavily on accounts and interviews given by former child soldiers from around the world," the author says; "*Beasts of No Nation* may be set in Western Africa, but it seeks to tell a more universal story of this horrible phenomenon" (Iweala 11). Debating child soldiers, John Hawley argues that "rarely has their consciousness in a time of violence been more graphically rendered than in Iweala's novel" (22).

The book opens with pre-teen protagonist Agu in a state of disorientation, suffering a loss of ontological stability:

> It is starting like this. I am feeling itch like insect is crawling on my skin, … and then air is just blowing into my ear and I am hearing so many thing: the clicking of insect, the sound of truck grumbling like one kind of animal, and then the sound of somebody shouting, TAKE YOUR POSITION RIGHT NOW! QUICK! QUICK QUICK! MOVE WITH SPEED! MOVE FAST OH! in voice that is just touching my body like knife. (1)

Right away, an unusual voice is established in an African 'pidgin', naïve, simple English that almost exclusively uses the present continuous tense. This style allows the reader "to enter Agu's vivid emotional landscape" as his "microscopic attention to detail" (Mackey 108) increases a sense of immediacy. Agu is trying to hide as a group of guerrilla fighters searches the grounds; as we later learn, he has just had to witness the murder of his father by other rebels, and is now found, abducted, and initiated into killing, in a scene in which the demonic Commandant orders Agu to hit, with increasing brutality, a kneeling captive with a machete. With regard to the "methodology of child 'recruitment' Agu's thoughts echo those of actual child soldiers … recorded by Amnesty International" (Hawley 23) – and they reported that their choice was either killing your best friend/family member, or being killed by them, in perverted acts of securing the new recruit's 'loyalty'.

Thus, very quickly, Agu is doubly traumatized in this unintelligible civil war – first by the violent loss of his father and family (with absent mother and sister as UN evacuees; see Iweala 68–72), then by being forced to kill in order to survive and be integrated into this guerrilla group as his new, surrogate family. He finds himself in an epistemological dead-end, his psychological confusion manifesting in physical and uncontrolled/uncontrollable re/actions: "I am vomiting everywhere. I cannot be stopping myself. Commandant is saying it is like falling in love, … I am growing hard between my leg. Is this like falling in love?" (21–22). The scene underlines how "trauma continues to intrude with visual, auditory, and/or other somatic reality on

the lives of its victims" (Rothschild 6). Moreover, the connection of violence and sexuality that Agu both echoes and experiences somatically is central to the instrumentalization of war participants as both agents and objects of trauma: More than any other character in Agu's perversely determined soldier life, the Commandant is the major agent of trauma, constantly killing at random, frequently raping Agu and his friend, Strika. Mackey aptly calls the Commandant a "predator extraordinaire" and associates him with Achille Mbembe's concept of the socially mobile 'war machine,' with its "'necropolitical subjugation of life to the power of death'"; this has two types of expenditures in war: "the way that warlike action 'contains an erotic dimension' and the way that 'giving death' has become an 'expression of sovereign power'" (Mackey 110). The novel spotlights how Agu becomes part of this "necropolitical war machine" (50) and soon 'gives death' quickly – although the unarmed mother and girl that he both butchers, after raping the elder, remind him of his own mother and sister. The traumatized boy – catapulted into immoral adult action without the psycho-emotive apparatus to process this – has become a beast. He has become the preying animal his name evokes: Agu means leopard. The novel's many animal associations and images stress the characters' becoming inhuman.[8]

Upon its publication, *Beasts of No Nation* was promptly hailed for addressing the mechanics of violence and traumatization both experienced and propelled by child soldiers. As Maureen Moynagh asserts, readers tend to equate childhood with innocence but are confronted with the child soldier as agent of "terrifying acts of brutality" (47). Anthropologist David Rosen, in his article "Child Soldiers, International Humanitarian Law, and the Globalization of Childhood," investigates the problematic rhetoric wrapped around the false notion of modern warfare as being incomparably more violent and horrific than in earlier times, and around categorically trying to absolve any young persons under 18 years of age by declaring them child soldiers. He argues that the Human Rights agencies' "straight 18" policy tends to eclipse many ethnic-cultural-historical implications (such as traditionally violent initiation rituals or socially accepted warriorhood and warfare) and falsely aims at globally standardizing all young war participants as victims of forced enlistment and of the ensuing crimes committed outside of the law; anthropological data, he observes in evoking Peters and Richards (1998: 183 f.), clearly suggest that "child soldiers should be seen as 'rational human actors' who have a 'surprisingly mature understanding of their predicament'" (299). He also states that "the vast majority of child soldiers are not forcibly recruited or abducted," while young women report experiencing forms of liberation, emancipation, independence and political enlightenment via their soldiering (298 f.). Calling for "a more varied and complex understanding of children," Rosen questions the general, politically constructed absolution of crimes committed by child soldiers, asking: "How should we see them: as innocent victims of political circumstance who should be protected and forgiven, or as moral agents who should be held responsible for their actions?" (304).

These important assertions aside, the number of an estimated 250.000 to 300.000 child soldiers worldwide, with some as young as seven years, remains shocking; approximately 40% of them are girls, who "are often used as non-combatant 'wives' (sex slaves)" ("Child Soldiers"). Raising public awareness to alleviate their plight remains one of HR discourse's primary aims – and a good reason for literary treatments. Iweala's novel makes tangible for us the "interior moral dilemma, … the child soldier's struggle with the clash between a moral education and the immorality of his or her actions" (Moynagh 48). In its many disjointed episodes that are narrated retrospectively through Agu's consciousness – mixing reminiscences of happy family life with creation stories (which project violence as a founding moment of society) – the genesis of an inhuman automaton, high on the intoxicating "gun juice" and on the lust for killing, is fragmentarily reconstructed. Then the crucial caesura happens, a climactic insight after fellow-soldier Rambo has finally shot their manipulating oppressor, the Commandant: "If they are ordering me KILL, I am killing, SHOOT, I am shooting, ENTER WOMAN, I am entering woman and not even saying anything if I am not liking it … I am thinking that I cannot be doing this anymore" (135). Agu drops his gun, departs from the group, leaves the hell of war – and enters what feels like heaven, a rehabilitation center with clean sheets, plenty of food, and an ocean view. He is a survivor of unspeakable experience, emotionally shattered, guilt-ridden, and psychologically overwhelmed.

It is at this stage that we fully realize we have been reading Agu's recollections and justifications of what he has experienced. Formally, this corresponds to the literary techniques Gibbs identifies as central for dealing with the loss or suppression of knowledge and memory in trauma: "fragmented narratives characterized by analepses; digressions, diversions and prevarications in narrative trajectory" (17). But the notion of narration as trauma therapy is charged: Amy, a white American therapist, keeps pressing Agu to communicate his feelings – which prompts his unease:

> I am saying to her sometimes, I am not saying many thing because I am knowing too many terrible thing to be saying to you. I am seeing more terrible thing than ten thousand men and I am doing more terrible thing than twenty thousand men. So, if I am saying these thing, then it will be making me to sadding too much and you too sadding too much in this life. I am wanting to be happy in this life because of everything I am seeing. I am just wanting to be happy. (141)

While being evasive and hyperbolic, Agu's sad summary of the incommunicable experiences – as both victim and agent of trauma – stresses his wish to transcend his traumatization and to claim a chance for psycho-emotional restoration. But the "therapeutic vision of rehabilitation that Amy represents," Mackey problematizes, "is experienced by Agu as a violent imposition of narrative coherence"; she sees Amy in a long line of Westernized, white "women rescuing black boys" (110 f., 118). Moynagh diagnoses the inherent pattern similarly: "There is, it seems, a place already prepared

in the Western imagination for the African child soldier as a subject of violence in need of human rights intervention and rehabilitation – intervention that threatens to mimic colonial infantilising of Africans as needing the 'protection' of European powers." (41). While this formula fits the bestseller by former child soldier Ismael Beah, *A Long Way Gone* (2007), which corresponds to the pattern of human turning beast turning human again, Iweala's text provides an ambivalent ending, an experiential divide between trauma patient and counsellor, and posits that gradual rehabilitation-cum-healing is far from guaranteed. Iweala's fictional trauma narrative withholds the re-transformation of the soldiering child as agent of violence. In doing that, the novel seems to ask Western readers to examine their – our – investment, emotional and intellectual, in the text, and the cultural/social/psychological assumptions as well as codings we attach to that. And while the role of the agents of trauma is quite clear here, that of the agents of potential re-humanization is not.

Conclusion

Africa continues to translate violence into the genealogy of generations. The continent's (recent) traumatic and traumatizing history – with examples like the "human atrocities committed during the volatile period to end apartheid" in South Africa (Gilkey and Kaijage 16), like the horribly efficient genocide in Rwanda, and like the child soldiers becoming dehumanized and deprived of spiritual vision – requires much processing indeed. Can literature help here at all? "[L]ike psychoanalysis, [it] is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing." (Caruth 3) The question of trauma "must be spoken in a language that is always somehow literary: a language that defies, even as it claims, our understanding" (5). In other words, "literary verbalization … remains a basis for making the wound perceivable and the silence audible" (Herman 259). Crucial in this functioning of literature as a site of (fictional) trauma processing, both immanently and in relation to the reader as witness, is what LaCapra calls "empathic unsettlement": a form of empathy that "stylistically upsets the narrative voice and counteracts harmonizing narration or unqualified objectification yet allows for a tense interplay between critical, necessarily objectifying reconstruction and affective response to the voices of victims" (LaCapra 102–109). This empathic unsettlement seems operative in *Disgrace*, with its ambivalent rapist-victim figure David Lurie and the way he challenges the readers' interpretation of different weightings of interracial sexual violence and trauma. *Hundert Tage* also contains what Sherill Grace calls the "refusal of redemptive forms of closure that suggest happy resolutions or the transcending of trauma" (Grace 234) – the book ends with David wondering whether his righteous Swiss countrymen would, for a change, manage to observe the snow falling and meditate the cosmos: "I bet they won't. [Ich wette dagegen]." (Bärfuss 208). Finally, in its focus on the war

machine as "a regime of subjection that produces exploitable infrahumanity," *Beasts of No Nation* presents to us the child soldier as "figure for a crisis in human futurity" (Moynagh 42, 51). "[T]he child is as much a victim of terror as its agent" (39) – a resumé that is as saddening as it is difficult to dispute. And so, for the time being, it appears that the genealogy of generations in Africa – as in many other places – continues to produce violence and trauma.

Notes

1 This paper, despite appearances maybe, and out of its culturally coded Western European perspective, does decidedly *not* project Africa as *the* primary site of traumatization but, in light of the observable contexts and implications of trauma, as one of the historically most obvious and instructive ones. Similarly, Bisschoff and van de Peer debate the inherent complexity in approaching the topic, "in particular when considering representations of African trauma and conflict created outside the continent, through global news networks, popular media and cultural industries. Many representations of African conflicts by non-Africans … have not been useful in creating multi-faceted views of the continent. Rather, they have led to the desensitisation of viewers, promoting voyeurism and a type of 'atrocity tourism', both real … and imaginary …" (5). With the current seismic shifts of political, religious, ethno-cultural and racial tensions the world over, and their attendant complex redistributions of power and resulting mass migrations, the scope of traumatization in the Middle East, for instance, appears impossible to assess in any coherent manner.

2 Athol Fugard complained about "white women [who] accept being raped as penance for what was done in the past? [That's] a very morbid phenomenon;" Nadine Gordimer found it "difficult to believe … that the black family protects the rapist because he's one of them" (Both qtd. in Mardrossian 73; 72).

3 Hohl, the family name, means 'hollow' or 'empty' in English; since no proper translation of the novel was available, much in this section will be paraphrased and translated by this article's author, and the German original will be given in brackets.

4 All quotations as well as basic information in this paragraph are taken from "The Rwandan Genocide."

5 While the original reads "Agathe," the common English form Agatha will be used here.

6 The etymology of the word Amsar (plural for Arabic "Misr") enriches Hohl's home with overlapping connotations of cultural/religious mission and transgression as well as imperialism: "In early Islam, [Amsar] referred to settlements that were established by Muslim warriors in conquered lands. The term is Semitic in origin; the original meaning is 'frontier' or 'border.' For early Arab geographers, misr was a frontier outpost. Misr also referred to an administrative territorial unit run by an appointee of the caliph." ("Amsar").

7 In his review titled "Suffer the Children: Two Nightmare Novels about Youths Used and Abused in African Wars," Anderson Tepper refers to Kuti as a "patron saint of rebellion".

8 Cf. Mackey's discussion of Fela Kuti's song and the cover showing "political figures like Reagan, Thatcher, and Botha [that] are depicted as 'animals in human skin', horned beasts

with blood dripping from their fangs" (120; fn 8). – The use of animal imagery in all three novels discussed here (e. g., David Hohl glimpses untainted humanity while briefly looking into a mountain gorilla's eyes; Bärfuss 148 f.) would easily merit an individual paper.

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Part IV
Re/Visioning and Re/Telling Trauma

From a Historical Trauma to the Palpability of History

The First World War and Its Commemorations in TV-Documentaries

Uli Jung

in memoriam Gerhard Schaub
(1938–2017)

When the fighting ceased in November, 1918, the World War I had caused approximately ten million deaths and circa twenty million wounded soldiers on all fronts. Civilian casualties were estimated at another seven millions. Nearly forty nations had participated in the war; the political systems of most of the defeated states – Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria – collapsed and caused the monarchies to be abandoned. Historians have since agreed that World War I was the arch-catastrophe, the first global trauma of the 20th century.

World War I was also the first war which was broadly reported on in the relatively new mass medium of film. Although on all fronts very rigid censorship regulations were imposed on photographers as well as cinematographers, the by-programs of the movie-houses were full of film coverage of the war. Moreover, the longer the fighting lasted the more full-length feature films were produced that had the 'Great War' (as it was called prior to World War II) as a background.

It was during World War I that governments realized the propagandistic value of film and started to use it actively as an instrument in their war efforts. Indeed, it is the propagandistic utilization of film that eventually led to the emergence of documentary filmmaking in terms of topical non-fictional story-telling, as Martin Loiperdinger argues (see Loiperdinger). Still, it must be clear that most of the war films of the time were not taken at real battles; they consisted rather more likely either of scenes taken at maneuvers way behind front lines or were even re-enactments of storm attacks carefully staged in front of movie cameras (see Jung and Mühl-Benninghaus).

> The reason for this was the limited number of operators who were admitted to the front … . Moreover, the bad lighting conditions in the trenches, the relatively low sensitivity of the emulsions of the raw film material and the weightiness of the cameras precluded filming in the foremost front lines. Censorship did the rest: Mass killings could not be filmed, only single graves were allowed. Wounded soldiers were to be seen only after their wounds had been dressed indicating that they were already recovering. Moreover,

> modern armory, such as certain types of war ships, large artillery, fighter planes, and even land survey tools were banned from both photographing and filming. … All these conditions and measures made it next to impossible to produce authentic front images which were, on the other hand, in great demand among the domestic audience. (Jung and Mühl-Benninghaus 385)

Despite poor preservation conditions thousands of historical films shot during World War I are being held today in archives across the world, they have become part of the collective memory cultures of the nations that were involved in the 'Great War'. These filmic documents have become more easily accessible when the European Film Gateway (EFG), founded already in 2008 under the auspices of the Deutsches Filminstitut (DIF), started in 2013 to put online thousands of films of World War I held by thirty-three European film archives (EFG14) (see european filmgateway.eu). This was the result of a European digitization project partly sponsored and financed by the European Union. Unfortunately, in February 2014, the EU ended their involvement and assigned future projects to the responsibility of the member states (cf. Magel). Still, TV-documentarists have been using this material as historical sources to illustrate their commemorative features which have become more regular as the commemoration anniversaries drew close. This is particularly true for 2004 (thus prior to the digitization project) when the outbreak of World War I saw its 90th anniversary.

The Panel

It is not the purpose of the following essay to scrutinize the historical film materials themselves, but rather to analyze how a select panel of German commemorative TV-documentaries applies the historical film materials to give general audiences an idea of what World War I was all about. In 2004 two regional German Public Television stations, *Südwestrundfunk* (SWR) and *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* (WDR (which yet have a nationwide reach through cable or satellite broadcasts), aired a series of five programs that approached World War I from different thematic vantage points: Susanne Stenner's *Mythos Tannenberg – Der Krieg im Osten* (2004, P: SWR), Heinrich Billstein's *Gashölle Ypern* (2004, P: WDR), Mathias Haetjens's *Alptraum Verdun* (2004, P: WDR), Anne Roerkohl's *Schlachtfeld Heimat* (2004, P: WDR) and Gabriele Trost's *Trauma Versailles* (2004, P: SWR).

Furthermore, in 2012 the *Zweite Deutsche Fernsehen* (ZDF) produced a three-part documentary, *Weltenbrand*, the installments of which were titled *Fegefeuer* (Stefan Brauburger, Stefan Mausbach, directors), *Völkerschlacht* (Peter Hartl, director) and *Sündenfall* (Christian Frey, Annette von der Heyde, directors). The centenary of the outbreak of World War I was commemorated on German Public Television only with broadcasts of German versions of French and British documentaries, *Spuren*

des Krieges – Die Westfront 1914–1918 (F 2014, Thierry Berrot, director; P: Dockland Yard; Gedeon Programmes; German version: Kelvinfilm) and *1914 – Die Welt im Krieg: Soldaten aus den Kolonien* (GB 2014, Tim Kirby, director; P: History Production London; German version: k22 film & entertainment). The only exception was Karoline Kleinert's *Heimatfront – Die Berliner und der Erste Weltkrieg* (D 2014). The ninetieth anniversary and likewise the centenary of the Battle of Verdun were once again commemorated on German TV by broadcasting German versions of foreign productions, the two-part *Apocalypse Verdun* (F 2016, Isabelle Clarke, Daniel Costelle, directors; P: ECAPD; France Television; German version: Kelvinfilm), and, additionally, reruns of the above mentioned German TV-documentaries from 2004. Only Stefan Brauburger und Stefan Mausbach responded with a fresh documentary, *Verdun 1916 – Stimmen aus der Hölle* (D 2016).

The Historical Materials

As Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus states:

> "The absolute disappearance of human beings from the bleak anonymity of the battle grounds is part of the most significant characteristics of World War I, alongside with the panorama of destruction. To document this invisibility inside the images of depredation has always been among the most difficult tasks for screen writers, directors, and cinematographers." (Mühl-Benninghaus 211).

To achieve a valid analysis of respective TV-documentaries, it must first be ascertained which function the historical war documentaries served a hundred years ago. Given the rigid censorship regulations which authorities of the empire as well as the Federal German States imposed on different levels (both military and civil) it must be assumed that no photographs, nor any film footage, could be publicly displayed without a formal official approval. Both media were seen as essential tools of the war propaganda at the fronts, in occupied territories, at the home-front and in neutral countries. In consequence it must also be assumed that they were not geared at mirroring the traumatic experiences of the soldiers in the trenches or to implement or even spread a feeling of loss among those who were seeing these films. Indeed, as an example of a cinema owner of Trier, Peter Marzen, shows, who used to produce numerous local non-fiction films in his home town between 1902 and 1926, screenings of these pre-war local films during the war were meant to give mothers and/or wives of casualties an opportunity to see their loved-ones again in full motion, hoping to soothe the grief they felt about their losses. (For more details see Hoppe, Loiperdinger and Wollscheid; Braun 2002 and 2005; Braun and Jung.) This already indicates that the combination of war 'coverage' and other program items on the local big screens were part of a discourse which seemingly held audiences at home

informed about the war effort and at the same time gave them solace in the face of the hardships that this very same war effort imposed on them, the more hard-felt the longer the war lasted.

Especially in the early weeks of the war did cinema owners use the new situation to highlight the cultural value of the cinema as opposed to the legitimate stage: "The theatre has lost its magic. We don't want the dream, we want reality. The movie house is able to present this. Here are the pictures of Belgium, the smoking debris of destroyed villages, the ruins of Fort Lousin, the jovial curfew of German musketeers in Brussels. Here is the truth." (Költsch n. p.). Thus the enthusiasm that prevailed at the beginning of the war was seen rather as an opportunity than as a burden for the German film business. In consequence, it must be assumed that the non-fictional films that were part of the regular program line-ups in the movie houses were not perceived as informational but rather as the realm of patriotic sentiments and nationalistic contemplation.

As of November 1914, sixty-four film companies had applied for a permission to send their cinematographers to the fronts (see Anon. "Kriegsaufnahmen"). Only a few permissions were granted and the approved cinematographers were stopped by the local military authorities on the front. Still they achieved a number of scenes of front life and military maneuvers. Authentic battle footage could not be filmed. Still topicality could be achieved as the films responded quickly to the latest developments in the foremost front lines and thus augmented what audiences at home could read in newspapers.

In this context newsreels played a vital role. The first German newsreel, *Eiko-Woche*, started business in March 1914. When branch offices of foreign production companies in Germany were closed and film imports from all enemy states were banned from the German market right at the beginning of the war, quite a number of German film companies started their own newsreels: *Hubert's Kino-Kriegsschau* (September 1914), *Messter-Woche* (October 1914), *Nordisk Authentische Weltkriegsberichte* (October 1914)[1] and *Kinokop-Woche* (November 1914). Some of those newsreels were also exported from the very beginning of their existence. They quickly became regular items of the short feature programs which still prevailed in most of the small town movie houses at home. Four of the newsreel providers were permitted to send two operators each to the front where they still were not allowed to shoot films in the foremost trenches. Thus, once again, authentic battle coverages were not possible, and since all materials had to undergo complicated military and civilian censorship processes, the expected topicality of the items could hardly be achieved (see Anon. "Aus der Praxis" 413).

At the same time a lively political debate emerged concerning the utilization of war images as propaganda tools in neutral countries. This debate was fostered by the insight that some of the enemy states had already made progress in this field. *Der Kinematograph*, the leading German trade journal at the time, suggested that a com-

mission be appointed which was to guarantee a steady flow of German war-related films to the USA. Films had already been sent there and to other neutral countries as part of private commercial initiatives. At the same time the *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst*, a division of the Imperial Foreign Ministry, maintained that these initiatives should remain in private hands but announced its willingness to assist these endeavors. This opened also official channels for the exportation of German war films to neutral states (see Anon. "Aus der Praxis" 418).

In the course of the war, both private and official measures were taken to make interior and exterior propaganda more powerful. In November 1916, the *Deutsche Lichtbild-Gesellschaft* (DLG) was founded under the auspices of the heavy industries. "The purpose of the company was to systematically endorse the cinematographic advertisement of German culture, economy and tourism, both domestic and foreign." (filmlexikon.uni-kiel.de 3421)[2] The DLG specialized in non-fiction short films that were offered to cinema owners to augment their by-programs. In January 1917, the federal state of Prussia founded the Royal *Bild und Film-Amt* (BUFA) which was to centralize the production of photos and films from the fronts. Production, editing, censoring and distribution of films were organized in horizontal integration which made BUFA the most efficiently working film organization to date (see fimlexikon.uni-kiel.de 3420). Following a suggestion of General Erich Ludendorff of the military High Command the Imperial government started to clandestinely buy up some of the most successful German film companies and founded the *Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft* (Ufa) to put the country's propaganda endeavors on a commercially more feasible basis. The role of the state was carefully covered up so that Ufa was widely perceived as a completely commercial enterprise (cf. filmlexikon.uni-kiel.de 7678).[3] Ufa added propagandistic feature films to the state's war publicity.

From all this it must be clear that the German war films from 1914 to 1918 were not intended to give a true rendition of the hardships that soldiers were put through, of the mass killings between the trenches, and of the absurdity of a static war on the fronts. They were, in contrast, meant to heighten the support of the war effort among the German people at home and to convey a positive image of Imperial Germany in neutral countries. Nevertheless, with more than 13 million German combat soldiers fighting on the various fronts and approximately two million fatalities, each German family knew exactly what was going on in the trenches. Moreover, during the so-called turnip-winter (1916/1917), when, due to failing crops in the fall of 1916, and an effective blockade of German sea harbors by the British navy, a hunger catastrophe occurred in Germany, hundreds of thousands of fatalities were caused at home. The traumatic experience of the war among both the soldiers on the various fronts and the civilians on the home-front could not be palliated with ever so many propaganda films that were screened in the movie houses.

This was all the more true since the ever growing shortfall of supplies lead to public protests, upheavals and even a general strike in February, 1918, in which

"Peace and Bread" were the most urgent demands. The increasing conviction that the war could not be won anymore and that the millions of sacrificed lives were to be in vain lead to the outbreak of a revolution in November 1918, which soon developed into a veritable civil war. Eventually, Wilhelm II, who had been staying at the German High Command in Spa, Belgium, as of October 29, abdicated on November 9, 1918, and went into exile in the Netherlands. Initial plans to maintain the German Reich as a constitutional monarchy were abandoned soon and the Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert was elected president on February 11, 1919; on August 14, 1919, the new democratic constitution went into effect: The short-lived Weimar Republic was founded. All this was covered on film in due regularity.[4]

The Commemorative TV-Documentaries

According to Mühl-Benninghaus the most common bulk of commemorative TV-documentaries of World War I follow a certain structure:

> Off-screen voices and sounds are being illustrated with historical filmic and photographic materials. … Oftentimes experts and eye witnesses appear on the screen, who contribute additional explanations. This procedure usually amounts to the denial of the invisibility of the First World War. The advantage of this is the creation of an impression of authenticity of the report. The [filmic] images assume the status of documents, which many times over coincide with real events at the front. … In the end, these images aim at an emotional mediation of the content matter. (Mühl-Benninghaus 212 f.)

The most obvious observation one makes when looking at the commemorative TV-documentaries on World War I is that the archival films are only presented in clips of hardly more than fifteen seconds each – not a single original film document is presented in an integral form. To adopt the clips to the frames of today's TV sets, the original aspect ratio of 4:3 is transformed into 16:9 which trims the images a little bit at the top and the bottom. All clips from historical film materials which are, of course, silent films receive 'diegetical' soundtracks: the sounds of marching troops are to be heard when soldiers march past a camera, sounds of explosions are to be heard when the image shows the blast of a shell. In Heinrich Billstein's *Gashölle Ypern* (D 2004) an officer's command "Drei, zwo, eins – Feuer!" even can be heard, followed by the thundering of a canon-shot. This example illustrates the filmmaker's attempt to provide a filmic realism that – at least in his point of view – the audience of the early 21st century is used to. This is absurd since firstly there is no commanding officer to be seen in this short clip who could have given this command, and secondly it seems to suggest that modern day audiences are expecting that soldiers only act on command and receive this short scene as being more in line with their expectation of what German warfare in the early 20th century was to be about.

This becomes especially apparent in Karoline Kleinert's *Heimatfront – Die Berliner und der Erste Weltkrieg* (D 2016). In a segment which deals with the shortfall of supplies for the civilian population of Berlin and the subsequent famine which caused thousands of deaths especially among the lower classes, the off-commentary maintains that quite naturally there were no archival films to illustrate the social situation. This does not mean that the documentary abstains from a visual illustration of the segment; it rather presents clips from Slatan Dudow's documentary short *Zeitprobleme – Wie der Arbeiter wohnt* (D 1930) which deals with the social conditions of the Berlin working class towards the end of the Weimar Republic. It goes without saying that the source of this visual illustration is not indicated so that non-specialized audiences must assume to be watching some extremely rare footage of the World War I home front. Besides, the presence of these images and the way they are applied contradict the off-commentary without an explanation how the verbal information about the social situation of the Berlin population can still be illustrated.

A second observation is that the French commemorative TV-documentaries which German television aired as of 2015 even digitally colorized the historical film documents. The original French five-part documentary series *Apocalypse Erster Weltkrieg*[5] which was aired on the public TV station France 2 in the spring of 2014, was seen by six million viewers and was a major popular success. The German premiere was broadcast on the pay-TV channel Sky on July 11, 2014, which – due to the limited reach of the channel – was probably seen only by a minor number of viewers. The popular success in France must be attributed to the digital colorization of the historical footage and the addition of 'diegetic' sound. The producer of the series, Louis Vaudeville, is quoted as saying: "If the cinematographers had had the opportunity then they would have shot in color." A critic stated that the result was impressive; still the question would have to be whether the films processed this way were still historical documents (Löwenstein 13).

In general, filmmakers seem to assume that black & white materials are no longer palatable for general audiences. This is all the more surprising since in the 2004 series of TV-documentaries use clips from films like *Der Deutsche Kaiser bei unseren türkischen Verbündeten* (BUFA, 1917) or *Der magische Gürtel* (BUFA 1917), which have survived in tinted form, but edit them in black & white suggesting that the filmmakers assumed that general audiences in 2004 are likely to connote black & white images with historicity. Either French filmmakers see it otherwise or there has been a significant change in expected viewer responses among German filmmakers during the last decade. Whatever might apply here, it still is a conscious distortion of the historical materials.

More importantly, the historical materials are not respected in their genuine historical intentions. They are being used like a stone pit from which modern day filmmakers can select whatever they want to use for their own projects. Thus, these films

are being deprived of their original contexts and put into new contexts which are being regulated by spoken text. The historical films are subjected to a historiographical discourse which pretends to use images to 'prove' its theses while they function merely to illustrate on a visual level what the text on a theoretical level maintains. The films are not seen as historical source materials from which new insights could be gathered, insights that might not be deducted from the written documents with which historiographers usually work. Ultimately, the TV-documentaries show that current pre-academic historiography still is not quite able to deal with visual sources in an argumentative context.

The clips from the archival materials do neither follow the chronology of the narrative of the off-commentary, nor do they follow the chronology of the sequence of their production during the war. In consequence it does not really matter that over and over again film materials from former enemy states are being edited in to illustrate off-screen statements on the German front situation. It goes without saying that in these cases the origins of the clips are not duly indicated.[6]

The respective clips are neither properly contextualized nor correctly identified by their titles. This way the impression is created that there is only one unified filmic discourse on the World War I, which is able in modern days to visualize the historical events from one single, so to speak 'objective' viewpoint.

To give an example: In the pre-credit sequence to Heinrich Billstein's Gashölle Ypern (2004) the off-commentary goes:

> Toxic gas – the horror of the First World War. The Germans are the first to apply the lethal gas to their enemies – on the Western front, at Ypern. Soon their enemies will follow suit. And then the gas kills on all fronts. The scientists develop the formula for the gas death, the chemical industries make the weapons suitable for the front. The Hague Land Warfare Convention of 1907 bans the use of chemical weapons, but nobody abides by this. And in the trenches thousands of soldiers die an agonizing death: French, Brits, Germans, Canadians, Belgians. Whoever survives is marked by this.

This text is illustrated by a mixture of staged scenes (which were shot at maneuvers) and documentary materials (shot in sick bays and in camps). Obviously a short clip from a British educational film was added, as well as images from scientific films.

The first German gas attack, which was staged on April 22, 1915, at Ypern, is described in an on-screen statement by the son of a German "gas pioneer"[7] and the daughter of a Canadian infantry soldier who report what their fathers had told them; whether these fathers had actually witnessed the first surprise attack or had reminisced about one of the many attacks which followed the first one cannot be concluded from the statements.

Interestingly, the gas weapon is the only new technological 'accomplishment' of World War I that is explained in every detail – scientific development, testing, large-scale industrial production, training of specialized combat soldiers and lastly the

application on the Western front – in the instalment *Gashölle Ypern*. Even Prof. Fritz Haber, who was then (and is still now) called 'the father of the gas war', is introduced and prominently portrayed at great length.[8] All the other new weapons – especially fighter planes, large artillery, submarines and dreadnaughts – are usually mentioned more or less in passing, although this armory experienced unheard-of technological improvements during the war.[9] This may be attributed to the governmental ban on the filming of details of this high-tech weaponry.

It is even more important to note that the historical films were not only taken out of their original contexts but that they are used without consideration for their original function (as actualities, newsreel items, propaganda films, educational films or filmic reports). This causes many times over that image and sound do not fit one another, and this in a double sense: that, on the one hand, image and off-commentary do not have anything in common, and that, on the other hand, the images, if viewed in their original context, make statements which well-nigh are contradictory to what the off-commentary would make audiences believe.

Once again an example: In the fourth installment of the ARD-series[10], *Schlachtfeld Heimat*, the off-commentary goes: "But the war machinery is running high. Ammunition and war equipment are lacking, and the soldiers cannot be replaced as quickly as they are being killed." To illustrate this statement a clip from the DLG film *Granatenherstellung im Werk Sterkrade der Gutehoffnungshütte* (1917) is shown in which workers in an armament factory are navigating a tipper truck among high stacks of already manufactured grenades to transport yet more grenades to a storage yard. Of course, it is not to be expected that the German film industry would produce, or even circulate, images of lack during the war, but it must be clear that the function of *Granatenherstellung* was indeed to demonstrate to its audiences in Germany and the neutral and allied countries that the Imperial army did not suffer from any lack of supplies.

The historical images are presented by the TV-filmmakers as if they were 'documents', while, in fact, they are only used as illustrations. One striking example also for this: In three installments of the ARD-series a well-known and often quoted shot from the BUFA film *Unser Hindenburg* (1917) can be seen: Hindenburg and Ludendorff, well aware that they are being filmed, are bending over a staff map, pretending that they are making plans for a future battle. In the first installment, *Mythos Tannenberg*, this short scene illustrates the acsension of the two to the High Command of the Eastern Front. In the third installment, *Alptraum Verdun*, it seems to signify Hindenburg's appointment as General-in-Chief and Chief Commander of the entire Imperial Army. And in the fifth installment, *Trauma Versailles*, the off-commentary evokes the impression that Hindenburg und Ludendorff are planning the much hoped-for decisive battle in the context of the so-called 'Michael Offensive' in spring, 1918. In all three cases the filmmakers suggest that the two generals are

seen in the topical contexts given in the off-commentaries, although the events the commentaries refer to happened at three different occasions in 1914, 1917, and 1918.

Anne Roerkol's Film *Die Propagandaschlacht im Ersten Weltkrieg* (2004) deals with the strategies which the Entente as well as the allied countries applied in order to ideologically convince soldiers as well as the civilian population of the necessity of the war and of the ultimate success of the own endeavors. The film discusses in this context how all media were integrated into the propaganda efforts according to their respective capabilities: newspapers, posters, photographs, school books, and naturally films. Clips from the films – they are predominantly taken from films advertising war bonds and from *Bei unseren Helden an der Somme* (BUFA, 1917) – are made recognizable as such by framing them in a special manner. This way they are distinguishable from clips taken from other historical contexts. By this practice it is suggested that there used to be a clearly discernable difference between propaganda images and other historical film images. This impression can only emerge because the filmmakers did not define by which means propaganda was discernable for the historical viewers from regular reports. This is all the more methodologically lamentable since the terms 'propaganda' and 'advertisement' used to be closely akin to one another, at least in Germany, at the time.

The artificial distinction between 'propaganda' and 'other' non-fictional films leads the audience to believe that there had been film images during World War I which were not politically functionalized. Especially films which concerned themselves with the war endeavors in the widest sense – specifically films from the 'front' – were submitted to a very harsh two-fold censorship, first undertaken by the command over the respective front section, and then by the respective censorship boards of the German Reich. This complicated censorship practice lead to a time lapse between the shooting of the material and its exhibition in the movie-houses. At the same time the political harmlessness of the content matters was thus guaranteed. The censorship practice and its consequences are nevertheless not elaborately discussed in the five instalments of the ARD-series.

Stefan Brauburger and Stefan Mausbach's *Fegefeuer* (2012), the first installment of the three-part TV-documentary *Weltenbrand*, which was produced by Germany's most popular pre-academic historian Guido Knopp – however controversial he might be seen by academics – starts in the pre-credit sequence with images of the arrest of Hermann Göring in 1945 by the 7th US-Army in May, 1945. The film refers back to the beginning of Göring's career during World War I which he started "at a new weapon which has a future. … His fame as a fighter pilot will pave his way to that man who will later unleash the Second World War – Hitler." Then the film cuts to images of General Charles de Gaulle leading the people of Paris through the Arc de Triomphe after the city was liberated from Nazi occupation by the end of August, 1944. "[De Gaulle] also used to be an officer during World War I and fought in a battle which became a symbol for the mass dying in the hell of Verdun. Like hundreds

of thousands of others he was also wounded. That he could not fight anymore and fell into German captivity was a disgrace which he later attempted to cleanse," the commentary asserts.

This way, the film suggests that World War I lead immediately to World War II which is, indeed, the dominant German point-of-view. This is not a correct rendition, since German historiography usually has it that the conditions of the Versailles Peace Treaty, which was signed on 28 June, 1919, set the cause for German interior political developments which ultimately made Hitler's ascent to power possible and eventually led to his staging a war that was meant to reinstall German pride and superiority after the so-called 'shameful peace.'

Interestingly, the film does not concern itself any further with this historical correlation. Rather it goes on after the credit sequence to highlight Göring's career during World War I. Since he was wounded already in 1914 and ended up being unfit for the infantry, he decided to seek other ways to serve and earn fame. Thus, he became a reconnaissance pilot and provided his officers with hundreds of still photographs showing the enemy fortifications and army build-ups. While this segment begins with original footage, obviously taken of him while he had already acquired some of the desired fame, it continues with images of the shooting of photographs from an airplane – images quite obviously taken on the ground and framed in a way that covered this fact up – and ends in a modern day re-enactment of Göring entering a castle near Epernay – "in safe distance to the front" – where Göring, "armed" with his photographs, is granted access to the highest military circles of the respective front section. Göring is played by an actor who moves through an interior which could pass as a historical French castle.

One could expect that this footage, which actually is briefly characterized as a "reconstruction" by an insert in the lower right corner of the frame, could be distinguished from the historical material by its use of color cinematography, but indeed the historical clips were digitally colorized – not only Göring's, but de Gaulle's as well – so that audiences could easily attribute the same level of 'credibility' to the "reconstruction" as to the historical images.

This signifies quite a development in the handling of historical film materials as visual source materials for TV-documentaries as compared to 2004. While in the 2004 series all re-enactments were shot in color, the historical clips were kept in black & white. Then, filmmakers seemed to assume still that especially non-specialized audiences were ready to see 'documents' in historical black & white images which must not be questioned, neither in terms of their content nor in terms of their evidential value. Less than ten years later, this consideration obviously does not concern the filmmakers anymore.

A Counter Example

For German and Austrian television Gernot Stadler produced a documentary commemorating the twelve battles on the banks of the Isonzo River between 1915 and 1918: *Isonzo – Der Krieg in den Bergen* (D/A 2013; P: 3sat, ORF, Gernot Stadler Film & Television). The river – now mainly running on Slovenian territory – formed the border (and front) line between Italy and Austria-Hungary at the time.

This film opens with impressive aerial shots of the Julian Alps with the tiny and shallow river in between the mountains. It uses very little filmic source material but rather shows images of the remnants of forts and other fortifications, front lines and trenches, caverns, observation spots, mountain fortresses – traces which still remind us of the war, not to speak of the many military cemeteries where the bodies of half a million soldiers found their final rest. The Austrian historian Manfried Rauchensteiner comments that in the first eleven Isonzo Battles more than 250.000 soldiers lost their lives while the Italians only managed to push back the Austro-Hungarian troops for as little as 34 kilometers in two years of fierce fighting. "History is ubiquitous. … The memory of the combats, the battles on the Isonzo, transforms the entire region to a memorial place on both sides of the border," the film argues.

In the Museum of World War I in the small Italian village of Caporetto (Slovenian: Kobarit; Austrian: Karfreit) "many of the dead soldiers do not remain anonymous anymore. Names and faces display the war as an interaction of single individual fates. The war as hundred-thousand-fold suffering." The manager of the museum, Jože Ŝerbec, states that in the high mountain region above the Isonzo more relics of the war are still to be seen than anywhere else in Europe. This induced him to seek the cooperation of six museums along the Isonzo to establish in 2007 the so-called *Weg des Friedens* (Peace Trail; Slovenian: Pot Miru) which connects the historical sites of World War I between Log pod Mangatom and Mengore (today all on Slovenian territory). Thus, since all institutions involved have agreed to preserve and reconstruct the remnants of various battles, the *Weg des Friedens* serves as a site of commemoration and contemplation.

The Pot Miru Foundation sees in the remnants of the twelve battles on the Isonzo an item of the cultural heritage of the region which must be conserved and made accessible for scholarly research as well as touristic purposes. "Through the close cooperation of Pot Miru and the Museum of the First World War we provide a good overture for the inculcation of the heritage of the Isonzo front for different generations and target groups," states Maśa Klarova of the Pot Miru Foundation. "We founded six open air museums which the Peace Trail connects with natural sites, tourist information offices and museums." This project is a work in progress and will eventually cover the entire frontline all the way to the Adriatic Sea.

Today The Pot Miru Foundation provides guided hiking tours that enable tourists to experience the history of the twelve Isonzo Battles and the natural beauty of

the Julian Alps at the same time. The foundation attempts to keep the memory of the war alive while giving tourists an opportunity to get an understanding of the everyday lives of the soldiers in the trenches, fortifications and museums. This is an endeavor to contradict the official historiographic mystification especially on the Italian side which still commemorates the heroism of soldiers who gave their lives for the fatherland. The open air war museums attract, the film states, tourists and entire school classes from Slovenia and Italy and to a lesser degree from Austria and give them a chance of a first-hand understanding of the front lines, the gain and loss of territory and the strategies of the armies on both sides of the front. The many military cemeteries, moreover, evoke an idea of how brutal the battles must have been and how many lives were sacrificed for a cause that a regular soldier in all probability did not grasp. The Peace Trail thus keeps the memory of World War I alive in a region which has changed so drastically in the last one hundred years.

Gernot Stadler's film is a striking example of how to commemorate World War I without manipulating the original archival footage of the war as if it were visual historical proof of the historiographic narrative which the off-commentary provides. It takes a very different path from the examples discussed above by demonstrating how it can be achieved to give people of today a feeling for what it must have meant to fight in World War I. The work of the Pot Miru Foundation, the museums involved and the oral history projects it has instigated, are an example of a memory culture that involves historically interested people more actively by making them experience the historical sites on foot. On the other hand, it makes the trauma of World War I of one hundred years ago more easily palpable since it does not confront the visitors with the hardships the soldiers had to live (and die) through but rather with the relics that are by now free of the blood that must have soiled them once and the stenches that must have exuded from them.

Conclusion

It might well be the case that behind the opening of *Fegefeuer* (2012) the true historical purpose of, at least, the German commemorative TV-documentaries on World War I lies a reading of history which does not refer to the individual and collective experiences inside the trenches of World War I as traumatic. Rather, it seems that the respective TV-broadcasts recognize the trauma only on a national level. It does not come as a surprise that the 5-part documentary of 2004 refers to Verdun, the most long-lasting and terrifying battle on the Western front. In its title it is referred to as *Alptraum* (nightmare) while the fifth installment which refers to the Versailles Peace Treaty discusses the historical events in terms of a *national trauma* – see the respective titles of the installments. Thus it is suggested that the outcome of the war and the fundamental ideological and structural changes it brought about for the

German Reich are still seen as the real trauma in German history. The abdication of the Kaiser, the establishment of a parliamentary democracy and the subsequent ascendency of Hitlerism seems to be the more decisive revision of the German past. Behind that, the individual sufferings of soldiers on all fronts seem to retreat into the background.

If read this way, historical trauma is an issue on a national level only. The individual hardships of families who lost their loved ones and war veterans who came home seriously and permanently mutilated and/or burdened with post-traumatic stress syndromes, so-called *Kriegszitterer* (shell shocked people), are hardly ever discussed in the TV-documentaries (for a more detailed account of this phenomenon see Kaes). The trauma of World War I is rather presented as a politico-historical issue which affects regular people only in as much as it fostered the rise of fascism and World War II in Germany. The historical dimension of the war, as it seems, has taken center stage today. The victims of the war – whether they were killed in action or returned home traumatized – seem to fall behind this historical evaluation of World War I.

The commemorative TV-documentaries pretend to explain the complexity of the first war in world history which was from beginning to end covered on film. This could have been a chance to engage in a discourse which bridges the gap between the sensually experienceable historical events and their academic historiographic analysis. But the filmmakers rather engage in a text-dominated conventional historiography. The use of the filmic documents is, thus, an attempt to illustrate history in a more concrete, personal way. Still, the trauma of World War I is rather relocated into the psyche of individual combatants and their families. The politico-historical dimension is shifted into a historiographical continuation which seems to explain the war in terms of its political causes and its effect on the subsequent history of the world. It must be clear that the surviving films of the time are not likely to be able to achieve the complexity of this chronological classification. They are therefore used by the filmmakers in order to make the complicated sequence more palatable for general audiences.

The ultimate aim of this practice is a historical narrative ex post by applying a teleological reading of all the events and developments during World War I. Since the filmmakers only rarely refer to historical, written documents, the film clips are misused as 'proof' of the verbal statements, although they often appear, as shown above, to be contradictory to what the off-commentary maintains or at least are only loosely connected to it. Especially the three-part program *Weltenbrand* (D 2012) looks at World War I more or less as a foreplay to the Second one and thus puts the events into a historical continuity which by 1918 nobody could foresee. Thus it seems as if World War I had a purpose, namely to set the stage for yet another, much bigger war.

The counter example of Gernot Stadler's film on the Isonzo Battles shows that even if the suggestion of the continuity of history is not in place in the commemorative efforts of the Pot Miru Foundation it is next to impossible to bring back a direct experience of the historical trauma to the visitors of the Peace Trail; all it achieves is a memory culture that involves a personal physical endeavor of those who want to approach the sites on the trail. That is much more than the commemorative TV-documentaries are able to accomplish.

Notes

1 The Danish company Nordisk was one of the most significant European production companies prior to World War I. Since Denmark remained neutral Nordisk films could still be exhibited on German screens.
2 Behind this initiative stood steel magnate Alfred Hugenberg who at the time also owned a number of publishing houses and newspapers. This became his inroad into major professional film production and distribution; in 1927 he would take over Europe's largest and most significant film production company, Ufa, over which he presided as chairman of the board until its nationalization in 1941 under Nazi rule.
3 Only after the war the state gave up its share in the company, making it a truly commercial enterprise.
4 Even the Kaiser's crossing the border to the Netherlands was documented on a paparazzo film of unknown origin which probably was never officially released but is now being preserved at the EYE Film Institute in Amsterdam: *De Kejser in Eisden*.
5 Only rarely are the logos of the French agency *Agence d'images de la defense* and occasionally of *Pathé Frères* inserted in the lower left corner of the frame, probably because the filmmakers were contractually bound to do this.
6 The original title and filmographical data could not be established by the author of this essay.
7 "Gas pioneers" were soldiers especially trained to operate the gas weapon.
8 Haber (1868–1934) was a chemist who received the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1918. He was in 1911 founder and for twenty-two years director of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Physikalische Chemie und Elektrochemie* which today carries his name: *Fritz-Haber-Institut der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft*. Despite his being the planer and organizer in the rank of a Captain of the German gas warfare, his reputation today still seems to be intact.
9 Only the two-part British TV-documentary *Legendäre Seeschlachten* (GB 2015; Andy Twaddle, director; P: BBC; German version: Docland) showed details of dreadnaughts and other British and German battleships. Part 1: *Kampf vor dem Skagerrak*; part 2: *U-Boot-Krieg in der Nordsee*.
10 ARD stands for A*rbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen* R*undfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik* D*eutschland* (Consortium of Public Broadcasters in Germany). It was founded in 1950.

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The Second World War and Trauma in the Museum
Canadian and German Depictions in the 21st Century[1]

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Introduction

There are at least five possible and often overlapping answers for what a museum aspires to, or can achieve by representing trauma: understanding, commemoration, experience, education and self-reflection, and meta-reflection. Firstly, trauma could refer to the historical formation of trauma discourse, including shell shock in World War I and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in later wars. Secondly, representations of trauma could be used to commemorate historical trauma; here, memorial museums usually seek to personalize past trauma and suffering by emphasizing the lives and testimonies of individuals. Thirdly, a museum could also have a visitor experiencing a simulated trauma; in other words, the visitor is steered towards empathy or second-hand witnessing of the situation of a traumatized individual or – more likely in museums – of a traumatized group. Fourthly, this can lead to empathetic unsettlement and learning through remembrance, highlighting the educational component of trauma, and challenging the visitor to self-reflect about the consequences of the stories being told. Finally, trauma could be represented in its structures, making its mechanisms in a meta-reflective sense visible to the museum visitor.

If trauma is exclusively owned by the victims of specific events, such as the Holocaust, museums are challenged to represent trauma. Trauma is more logically represented through media such as autobiographical and literary texts, interviews, and films. These types of media remain a logical choice for representation, even if they fail to represent what cannot be represented in language, according to postmodern trauma theory. Trauma requires representation or a narrative to be articulated so that it can be resolved, yet it resists representation. To represent trauma means attaching coherence to an event that eludes representation. Therefore, Cathy Caruth defines trauma as a belated experience: "The pathology consists … solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it." (1995: 4). This means trauma contains a performative aspect, whereby (cf. e. g. Trezise and Wake) the recipient or witness of a representation of trauma is incorporated into its expression. "What returns to haunt the victim, these stories tell us, is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has yet been fully known." (Caruth 1996: 6) This article is however far less

interested in the fundamental debate whether trauma can eventually be represented and lead to successful therapy (cf. Vees-Gulani: 30–37) or whether it is the ultimate expression of the 'real' that representation cannot access. Instead it is concerned with the opportunities and challenges facing museum representations dealing with trauma. Even if museums give considerable room to individual voices telling their traumatic experiences, a museum is always in danger of reducing individual trauma as an example of either a specific historical event, or of a structural experience such as mourning, pain, or hope. This means that trauma in the museum needs to be viewed as structural trauma, as Dominick LaCapra argues, as something that expresses transhistorical absence and is an anxiety-producing condition of possibility (2001: 84–85). Can the visitor empathize with the trauma and anxiety of historical groups? How can a museum relate to the realness of trauma that exists beyond representation through a historiographical and objectifying narrative without taking "the trauma out of trauma" (2016: 377)?

To circumvent postmodernist scepticism, trauma can be viewed as "existing outside conventional forms of perception, representation and transmission" (Arnold-de Simine 35). Trauma, and the Holocaust in particular, is seen as the last example of the 'real' (35). LaCapra identifies two secondary experiences of trauma: vicarious and virtual experiences (2004: 125). Vicarious experiences can lead to confusing one's participation in the traumatizing events through identification with the victim, whereby one becomes a surrogate victim. In the museum context, this is most likely to occur at authentic places of historical traumatic events, such as a memorial site of a Nazi concentration camp (cf. Arnold-de Simine 36–43; Clark 152).[2] This article is more interested in LaCapra's concept of the virtual experience of trauma:

> In the virtual (in contrast to the vicarious) experience of trauma, one may imaginatively put oneself in the victim's position while respecting the difference between self and other and recognizing that one cannot take the victim's place or speak in the victim's voice. Such virtual experience may be connected with what I have termed empathetic unsettlement, which, I would argue, is desirable or even necessary for a certain form of understanding that is constitutively limited but significant. (2004: 125)

LaCapra sees empathetic unsettlement as "a barrier to closure in discourse" that creates a certain discomfort in 'inhabiting' the experiences of others (2016: 41).

Such discomfort in inhabiting the experiences of others is often connected to the physical: "that we remember not so much in a cognitive, declarative fashion, but in one that is bodily and sensory" (Williams 98; cf. Landsberg 131). Consequently, Paul Williams argues that depiction of trauma must happen through an experiential return to the event. For museum educators this means "that in order for visitors to grapple with what others endured, the idea of an event must be 'burned in'" in visual depictions and experiential installations (98). Williams highlights the "pain of looking" in memorial museums that transcends from the victims' "agonizing experi-

ences" to the visitors' "discomfort at having to see" (62). He points out that "[w]hile the act of looking is typically understood as a necessary burden in order to appreciate what is at stake, the viewer's actual response may be more self-consciously rooted in the shortfall of his or her emotional reaction" (Williams 62). Alison Landsberg argues that through Freud's concept of transference, memories of traumas such as the Holocaust become imaginable, thinkable, and speakable to the visitor or recipient of a museum (cf. 135–136).

Empathetic unsettlement relates to the concept of 'difficult knowledge,' developed in Public History and Museum Studies, though it is often more connected to historical trauma than to structural trauma. It is useful to chart how the idea of empathetic unsettlement can be transferred to the practical field of museum representation and education. Difficult knowledge can be defined as knowledge that does not fit into traditional discourse. In regard to trauma it presents "the psychic difficulty of learning from traumatic experiences of others" (Britzman 28). Difficult knowledge forces visitors to challenge their own experiences, transcend boundaries and potentially reconceive their relationship with their own identities and the identities of others (see Lehrer and Milton 8). It can change the visitors' understanding of past and present discourses and potentially, their future actions, without didactically telling visitors how they should think, feel, or act.[3] Simon argues that a recipient's attentiveness to testimony is twofold: informational and (self-)reflexive (cf. 2004: 197). Instead of highlighting master narratives and collective stories, he sees transformative ways for the visitors to experience personal and local memoriess (see 2004: 198–199). In his later work, Simon emphasizes the affective side of exhibitions, the relation between "the affective force provoked within the experience of an exhibition and the possible sense one might make of one's experience of this force and its relation to one's understanding of an exhibition's images, artifacts, text, and sounds" (2011: 195). Julia Rose carries Simon's concepts forward in exhibitions that allow the recall of traumatic histories, using practical ideas of remembrance learning and 'commemorative museum pedagogy:' "Confronting the personhood of the historical victims in exhibits means the visitor will come face to face with the pain of the Other." (124). This would mean that trauma functions as an affective learning vehicle for visitors to challenge their own experiences and convictions, to involve one's own subjective understanding of traumatic witness stories (cf. also Garrett 94). However, the question remains whether museums give up on the historical claims they entertain when they represent the past through documentary or experiental fashion.

This chapter analyzes the depiction of trauma related to World War II in Canadian and German museum exhibitions in the last decade, and how they target the historical-informational, commemorative, experiential, educational, and meta-reflective dimensions of trauma. This will provide greater understanding of how different or similar representational and remembrance strategies in both countries work. Trauma connected to World War II relates to numerous actors and victims,

as well as collective victim groups of the war. These include war veterans, Holocaust and genocide victims of the war, civilian victims who either lost loved ones or experienced the mass destruction of war, for example in air raids, as well as the bearers of intergenerational trauma, especially in regard to the Holocaust. It is important to ask whether and how the traumas of perpetrator groups can be represented in the museum. Do museums represent World War II and Holocaust traumas as historical topics or are their representations interconnected with the understanding of other traumas and atrocities such the one of Residential Schools in Canada? Does storytelling happen from the perspective of the traumatized, or from the perspective of a historian or curator? Are stories told through installations using art-work, which challenges the museum visitor to think, and is therefore the most efficient way of representing trauma in the museum (ego-story, generalization, or visitor response art)? This article examines specific representational examples of World War II traumas through the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa (permanent exhibition from 2005 onwards) and in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg (2014). They will be compared to recent German exhibitions, in particular the German-Russian Museum (Deutsch-Russisches Museum) in Berlin-Karlshorst (2013) and the Military History Museum (Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr) in Dresden (2011). The analysis will be supplemented by looking at the special exhibition *Feeling War* (*Der gefühlte Krieg*) that recently displayed, staged, and simulated emotions related to war in the Museum for European Culture (Museum Europäischer Kulturen) in Berlin-Dahlem (2014–15).

The Canadian War Museum

The Canadian War Museum in Ottawa opened with its current permanent exhibition in 2005. Searching for trauma in the museum proves relatively difficult. Trauma discourse is thematically documented in the museum's World War I gallery featuring the standard exhibition case on shell shock, paired with a video and a couple of audio recordings. This is preceded by a staged scene where the visitors walk through the mud of Passchendaele, which prepares them for the hardships of battle. Shell shock (or in more recent terms, PTSD) is just presented as a side effect. Indeed, any experiencing of trauma is drowned out by the dominance of the master narrative, in which Canadian valor and courage are highlighted as leading to the autonomy of the Canadian nation-state via the war (cf. Brower 95 for the repressive power of narrative in working through trauma). It is particularly telling, that in the World War II gallery, the concept of soldiers' trauma – whether in the air-war or in the active fighting in Italy and Normandy – does not appear. The Dieppe disaster landing in 1942 ends tellingly with a panel text: "Courage at Dieppe: Despite heavy losses, Canadian soldiers fought valiantly and carried out acts of great bravery and valour."

In the subsequent air-war section, one drawing highlights the "stress and fatigue" of Bomber Command air crews, returning from their missions over the German Reich, without detailing what this stress might have been. The visitor walks through a battle scene in Italy and disembarks from a landing boat in Normandy. In these scenes, the visitor is greeted by more texts talking about the heroic valour of the Canadian soldiers, as well as marking the risks and sacrifices of war that must be endured by heroes full of willpower. Even the cabinet on the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps in the Liberation and Victory section deals exclusively with physical injuries.

The expectation would be that trauma might play a greater role in the penultimate section of the World War II gallery on the Holocaust and Canadian prisoners of war in Japan. Yet the Holocaust panel is too brief, telling one tragic victim story, to truly target the traumatic experience of the victims; it focuses on the discovery of the camps instead. Since the latter is highlighted in an almost revisionist way, it assigns the war a purpose as such that seems more like a justification for the war than an expression of trauma either for Holocaust victims or for the Canadian soldiers due to their horrific discoveries. The "Atrocities in the Pacific" exhibit focuses on Canadian prisoners of war, mainly through photographs and objects. It gives a glimpse into the traumatizing experiences of prisoners-of-war (PoWs), but in the end the line "liberated at last" marks the historical experience as an episode that is overcome through victory and liberation. Similarly the "Canadian PoWs in Europe" display, in the previous "Liberation and Victory" section, highlights factual experiences and anecdotes of hardship and survival. Perpetrators are not targeted in either exhibit since the Canadian collective perspective dominates. The final section "Homecoming" targets the veterans' problems in re-integration in civilian life, but not their specific traumatic effects or the concept of trauma.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights

In the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) that fully opened in Winnipeg in November 2014, one would expect that trauma would be the most closely represented in its fifth gallery "Examining the Holocaust." This is the only gallery in the museum that focuses on one historical event by itself. However, similar to the overarching narrative of how war and heroic suffering create the Canadian nation in the Canadian War Museum, the CMHR has too much of an overarching narrative that adopts the journey from dark to light, from the bottom to hope. This narrative is symbolized in the museum's Tower of Hope as a journey from human rights violations to action and overcoming. The museum does not mention the concept of trauma once. The museum's mandate seems to guarantee that historical traumas of individual victims or victim groups have already been overcome. Only a few video narratives in the "Examining the Holocaust" gallery indicate individual traumatic

Figure 1: Film Theatre. "Examining the Holocaust" Gallery. Canadian Museum for Human Rights Winnipeg, April 2016 (Photo: Stephan Jaeger)

experiences, but here the museum seems to suggest that individual trauma cannot be replicated or experienced by visitors, which reinforces the visitors' distance to the narrative (Johnston-Weiss 60). Consequently, witnessing the Holocaust becomes more a matter of documenting and speaking out about it than of expressing and working through a trauma.

If one shifts the search for the ones who are traumatized, from the victims such as the Jews, Sinti and Roma, and disabled people, to Canadian groups, the museum seems to express a stronger form of working through trauma. The centre piece of the "Examining the Holocaust" gallery is a film that targets Canadian anti-Semitism during World War II and the lack of Canadian help for Jews seeking to emigrate to Canada, especially by discussing the failed journey of the St. Louis. It expresses the very didactic message that Canadians could have helped to save at least some lives. This historical failure becomes an invitation to do more work for Human Rights. Throughout the Holocaust display, starting at the ramp that leads towards the gallery, the visitor encounters a dark, fragmentary architecture that reflects the Night of the Broken Glass (*Reichskristallnacht*), as well as broken reflections from enlarged poster images along the side-walls of the gallery.

The enlarged background photographs of the gallery are grey and create a kind of emotional timeline from the rise of Nazism up until the death marches at the

end of the war. The visitor has an emotional reaction to the historically traumatic atmosphere, even if the stories, items and photographs on the front of the wall seem too encyclopedic to do much more than introduce the facts of the Third Reich and Holocaust, and too exemplary to let individual or collective perspectives truly speak. Surrounded by this atmosphere, the visitor enters the film theatre. The film uses artistic drawings to highlight a symbolic message. After the failed international conference in Evian in July 1938 that was supposed to promote the emigration of Austrian and German Jewish refugees, a bang renders the shattering of glass as an introduction to the events of the *Reichskristallnacht*. After displaying some documentary footage and archival photographs, the film shows a gathering of the Jewish Canadian Congress, depicting their expectation that it is finally time to act, as well as their hope that Canada would immediately accept 10.000 refugees. The narrator continues "But across the country, coast to coast, the stain of anti-Semitism remained." A stain spreads over the screen, spelling out messages like "Jews out!," and photographs of anti-Semitic and fascist Canadian leaders. The drawing of the stain works as a leitmotif throughout the film, from beginning to end, when swastika drawings on a synagogue in the Canadian present transform into a meta-drawing: the spraying of a swastika with the narrator commenting, "The stain of anti-Semitism in Canada remains," but then she expresses hope for future generations while the swastika is wiped away. In other words, the actual trauma of Holocaust survivors is not represented in the film. However, metaphorically speaking the CMHR creates a Canadian perspective of responsibility and guilt. Unlike other exhibits in the CMHR, this one refrains from arguing that the stain has been overcome completely in the present. That being said it expresses its hope for a brighter and more inclusive future, emotionally paired with the images of young children looking into the camera. Thus, the most traumatic thing in the "Examining the Holocaust" gallery is the emotional effect it has on the visitor. This effect influences the belief in Canada's positive role in human rights, which emerges from the metaphorical transfer of the concept of trauma from victims to a collective perpetrator/bystander group. This collective group of perpetrators/bystanders is depicted as having used similar discriminatory techniques that the visitor has witnessed previously, in the Nazi state violence section, though on a much lesser scale. At the same time, the film's message is too didactic to cover the paradoxical nature of the concept of trauma.

A Case Study: the Expulsion and Relocation of Japanese-Canadians in Canadian Museums

To understand the Canadian side to better representing trauma, two exhibitions dealing with the expulsion and relocation of Japanese-Canadians from the Canadian West coast during World War II, in the Canadian War Museum and CMHR respec-

Figures 2 & 3: Exhibit "Forced Relocation." Gallery "Forged in Fire: the Second World War, 1931–1945." Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, May 2015. Booth "Under Suspicion: Japanese Canadians and Wartime Rights." "Canadian Journey" Gallery. Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, March 2015. (Photos: Stephan Jaeger)

tively, will be juxtaposed. The CMHR represents this topic exclusively in terms of a legal discourse. The booth entitled "Under suspicion" – the first of the eighteen booths showcased in the "Canadian Journey" gallery – is built with plywood to give the space the feel of a labor camp. The introductory panel sets the narrative tone. Firstly, it presents the topic as a case study for the human rights question: "How do international conflicts affect the way we see our neighbours?" The exhibit does not try to answer this question. Instead it presents photos and documents showing how Japanese property and businesses were seized by the state. With a display of real suitcases from relocated families, a factual quote by a survivor about being treated as a criminal and being stripped off all civil rights. On the left hand side of the booth there is a move towards redress and formal reconciliation, and the booth ends with a copy of the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement from 1988. In this way, the exhibition moves from legal loss of rights, to the effect of this loss, to the acknowledgement of the right violation; it moves from violation to solution. The main panel mentions two groups of perpetrators in extremely general terms: "some people" who were racist and thought the Japanese-Canadians were plotting with the enemy, and the state, which issued the forced relocation.

The Canadian War Museum has less space for the representation of the Canadian-Japanese internment. Under the header "Forced relocation," it represents a two-dimensional poster and print exhibit that is divided into two columns. The visitor approaches the right hand side first. The main image is a photo of a truck load of people to be relocated. The image seems to trigger the image of cattle. Three newspaper title headers make clear that the demands come from different political parties,

the government, and the people. The focus of the explanatory texts is on racism and fear-mongering. Unlike the CMHR they also spell out the steps of forced relocation and expulsion. A quotation by Japanese-Canadian Joy Kogova reads: "The thousand little traumas of racism that were our little diet. Being despised. Being snubbed by white Canadians. Being portrayed in newspapers, as ugly, as unwanted, as deceitful, as somehow sub-human." The rest of the display presents five individual portraits, two on Japanese-Canadians in the Canadian military. This achieves an effect of contrasting the contributions of Japanese-Canadians to war and society with their ill-treatment.

Which kinds of trauma are represented in these two cases? The CMHR, at best, is interested in Canadian trauma as a national collective perpetrator, guilty of discriminating against another group. Since the booth simply highlights a legal journey from crime to reconciliation, there is no direct trauma expressed. It is an episode in the history of wrong-doing that can be legally corrected. The individual suffering disappears. The visitor is left to wonder whether wartime suspicion and discrimination of a perceived 'other' is automatic, or whether it can be avoided if people and governments were just better. It is depicted as just one of many stories, and the legal side pre-dominates the human side. The *Canadian War Museum* is subtler, partially because its relocation exhibit is the exception to the master narrative of the museum. Indeed, it explores a different subject matter than how Canadian soldiers and civilians fought through hardship, sacrifice and suffering to victory, leading to the emergence of the Canadian nation. The topic of victim and survivor trauma is more apparent, as is the trauma of the Canadian perpetrators. The exhibit contrasts with the master narrative of the museum by drawing parallels between its "Forced Relocation" exhibit and the treatment of the Canadian PoWs in Japanese camps, as well as to the Holocaust through the metaphor of the subhuman.

Nevertheless, to a large extent both Canadian national museums avoid discussing trauma as a topic and concept, and do not offer much material for researchers to understand the effects of museum representations of trauma on the visitor.[4] The visitor of the Canadian War Museum might reflect on Japanese-Canadian trauma, but hardly experiences any unease in the museum. In this sense, the visitor is not exposed to empathetic unsettlement or the transformative powers of difficult knowledge, which incite the idea of trauma. They do not feel challenged beyond their comfort zone (cf. Arnold-de Simine 2). The CMHR visitor might be surprised about Canadian moral failures but always sees a solution, indicating that collective trauma has been or at least can be overcome.

The German-Russian Museum in Berlin-Karlshorst

The third example to be discussed is the new permanent exhibition of the German-Russian Museum in Berlin-Karlshorst (a historical villa where the 'Eastern front' World War II surrender was officially signed). The exhibition opened in May 2013. The museum shows a shift away from a national to a global concept of war, which allows for the expression of collective historical traumas to be transferred into a simulated structural trauma, in which the visitor can empathize with specific historical groups. The exhibition uses the national (the collective German and Soviet perspectives) in a historical sense to express an abstract simulated experience about the impact of war. The museum does not attempt to create the illusion that the past can be "experienced" as such. Instead, it constructs and simulates structural experiences that rely on the construction of collective perspectives of specific groups. For example, the museum focuses on Soviet prisoners of war, the interactions between Germans and civilians in the Soviet Union during the occupation, and the experience at the Soviet and German home fronts (cf. Jaeger 2017: 31–33). As a result, historical trauma is presented through certain symbolic objects. In the last room of the exhibit, entitled "Consequences of War and War Memories," the permanent exhibition seems to run out of space and is not able to cover topics in detail. This last room targets many postwar topics by displaying documentary texts with one or two objects each. This allows a certain symbolic access to the possibly traumatic suffering of groups whether it is a suitcase for a returning German PoW, an identity card from an NKVD[5] filtration camp belonging to a Ukrainian forced laborer, a photograph of the demolished Sevastopol that had to be rebuilt with help of German PoWs, or a handcart marking the exile and expulsion that took place after the war. In the end, this room examining the historical trauma of returning war veterans, PoWs, expellees, and other traumatized civilians is too episodic to develop an expression of trauma. The documentary texts, explaining the symbolic function of each object, dominate any imaginative approach that the objects could inspire. Here, trauma is present in the topics selected but its paradoxical requirement of telling it to truly exist is not.

However, structural experiences of trauma echo throughout the exhibition, so that the visitor can chart secondary structural themes and perspectives. For example, the third room of the exhibit creates a collective perspective and structural experience of the fate of Soviet prisoners of war. As in the following room, depicting the German occupation on Soviet territory, the visitor travels through the horrors of German atrocities. The room merges the voices of the victims with the perpetrators' voice and gaze in many photos, charts, documentary material, and other material objects. The victims are given a voice, for instance, in four audio stations that represent the victims' biographies, supplemented by a slideshow of historical photographs. One of the most effective displays are the facsimiles of the passport

photographs of Sofija Petrova taken within 18 months, in which Petrova seems to have aged by at least 35 years. Individual trauma merges with the structural simulation of the total war of annihilation. The visitor empathizes with the collective's historical traumas, which creates a structural unease. Through this unease, the visitor can feel the incomprehensible effect of suffering in the trauma of collective victim groups in World War II.

The Military History Museum in Dresden

The Military Historical Museum of the Bundeswehr (German Federal Armed Forces) in Dresden (re-)opened with an entirely new permanent exhibition, in a redesigned building in October 2011. The museum has chosen a twofold approach: first, it presents the traditional story of German warfare from 1300 to the present as a chronological exhibition in the original arsenal building. Secondly, it presents a thematic tour in Libeskind's wedge, the *Themenparcours*, which confronts the visitor with the violent effects of war through ideas and themes (cf. Pieken 66–74). Unlike the two Canadian museums it is a presentist museum that engages the visitor in a networking effect throughout the museum (Jaeger 2015: 242). Consequently, the exhibition is shaped less through individual or collective historical perspectives, and instead through historical abstraction and anthropological universalization, combined with historical documentation. This can create a dynamic relationship between past, present, and future (Jaeger 2015: 230–243). The question whether this approach allows for representation or a simulated experience of trauma needs to be answered on multiple levels.

Architecturally, Libeskind's wedge points to the traumatic effects of war. Visitors can enter the tip of the wedge, oriented skyward, on the fourth floor, leaving the inside of the museum through a glass door, which opens up on a view of Dresden's reconstructed cityscape, obstructed through tilted slabs. The obstruction through the slabs reminds the visitor of traumatic destruction, and asserts that the healing and reconciliation process from trauma can never be complete. The inside exhibit of the top level of the wedge features three air-war attacks during World War II: the *Luftwaffe* (German Air Force) attack on the Polish city of Wielun on the first day of the war, the Nazi air raid of Rotterdam, and the Allied firebombing of Dresden. This makes sure that Dresden's trauma cannot be read out of the context of German responsibility for the suffering of civilians in the war at large. Libeskind's wedge does not offer any 90-degree angles or corners. Everything, even the benches are sharp and pointed, the floor is slightly uneven. Thus, as a larger symbolic picture, the museum refutes clean narratives towards hope and regeneration that were expressed in Winnipeg and Ottawa. A scar remains in the visitor experience; as with trauma stories, the whole story can never be represented.

Figure 4: "Dresden View." Obstructed View of Dresden through Outside Part of Wedge. Permanent Exhibition. Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr (MHM), Dresden, March 2012. (Photo: Stephan Jaeger)

Beyond the discussed architectural features of the wedge, atmospherically the museum keeps its distance, so that the visitor does not experience unease. One of the few exceptions is the exhibit "War and Suffering", located on level 1 between the "1914–1945" and "1945-Present" chronological exhibitions. The majority of "War and Suffering" is sequestered in a structure which is a few feet thick and covered in what appears to be textured dark green, grey, and black felt (cf. Johnston-Weiss 102–112 for a detailed analysis). It is not readily apparent to the visitor, either ascending or descending the main stairs from other floors of the museum, and must actively be sought. Unlike in the larger display panel with the chronology, or the other open exhibition, the visitor must pull up sliding drawer doors to see the displays. This places visitors in direct confrontation with one or two objects, for example, photographs on the pogroms in Lviv, so that they are challenged to imagine the situation behind the artifact (and to connect it to other parts of the exhibition). One exhibit is the skull of an unknown German soldier in World War II who committed suicide by filling his mouth with water and then shooting himself in the mouth, so that the water exploded and completely destroyed his skull. A visitor who is not completely shocked and paralyzed by the display, might seek to imagine what lies behind this

historically unknown situation. How traumatized or ridden by guilt or pain could a soldier have been to kill himself in such a drastic fashion? Here, the trauma of war is felt particularly in the abstract or unknown.

Another installation implicitly alluding to trauma is the "Bursts of Fire" installation, displaying 250 fragments of a grenade, each tiny piece of which could kill. Although the installation almost has an aesthetic beauty to it, it also brings up feelings of danger in relation to war by seeing how much damage one small grenade can inflict. The visitor gets close to traumatic experiences from an aesthetic distance. In the "Protection and Destruction" section of the thematic tour the visitor encounters Ingo Günther's art installation *The Hiroshima Thank-You Instrument*, which alludes to human shadows branded on the building walls by the intense flash of the nuclear explosion. Silke Arnold-de Simine argues that the installation is based on constant repetition and resembles trauma rather than memory in its enactment and replaying of the horrific events. However, she recognizes too that the art installation inspires "playful encounters rather than sober reflection" (73); in other words the visitor might be more interested in original shadow effects than connecting them to the traumatic nature of the event.

Finally, one wonders whether the Military History Museum can be read in such a way that it expresses a collective working-through of German traumas, as well as whether it expresses German perpetration or suffering in the air-war and expulsion. The Peace Memorial (*Musée Mémorial pour la Paix*) in Caen or other Allied museums mostly avoid a substantial discussion of possible Allied wrong-doings – such as the total destruction of Caen by Allied air-raids (cf. Brower 85). In contrast, German atrocities in the war and the Holocaust stand front-and-centre in many different exhibits in Dresden. Throughout the museum, the visitor is challenged as to whether they are in a traditional army museum or in an anti-war museum: the museum consistently challenges the visitor to think about the impact of war. One could argue that the many different depictions of war's impact, and World War II's impact in particular, mirror a constant working through of both, the war's losses as well as its criminal nature. This is most evident in the 36 library-like roller shelves on level 3 that make up the section "Memory." For example, one cabinet entitled "Mass Deaths – the Glorification of Dying" assembles so-called 'hero letters' from the town of Rheda that were sent to the mourning families of the dead soldiers. The visitor is led to empathize with the mothers and family members receiving these letters, and to an extent reliving their trauma. Did they believe these letters, or did they become truly cynical about the Third Reich? Again this example demonstrates that because of the museum's merging of anthropological universalization and historical representation, it creates a dynamic relationship between past, present and future. This relationship meets trauma's paradox of representation and non-representation, and allows the retelling and structurally simulated experiencing of trauma by the visitor.

Figure 5: Section "Mourning" Special Exhibition *Der gefühlte Krieg/Feeling War*. Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, June 2015. (© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Foto: Ute Franz-Scarciglia)

Feeling War

Finally, this article briefly analyzes the recent special exhibition *Feeling War* that displayed, staged and simulated emotions related to war in the Museum for European Culture in Berlin-Dahlem (2014–15). Though the exhibition is mostly based on examples from World War I, it is more significant for the discussion of war trauma in the museum since it is explicitly anti-historical. It expresses and simulates structural emotions, in particular love, fear, and grief. All these raw emotions are present throughout the exhibition, for example in the special staging of the letter and postcard exchange between front and home of an unmarried couple. Trauma appears particularly in the exhibition's final part. Three coloured photographs of forest and nature scenery from Simon Menner's 2010–2013 "Camouflage" series that picture a hidden sniper, are presented to the viewer to trigger a moment of fear and danger. These pictures are framed by a portrait of a soldier with a horrific face injury from Ernst Friedrich's *War against War* (*Krieg dem Kriege*) from 1924 as well as a self-portrait photograph by the artist Menner. The two portraits look surprisingly similar, with the exception of the face injury, which creates the impression for the visitor that this man was injured before realizing the 90-year difference between past and present. The similarity of the three nature-sniper photographs seems to endlessly

repeat – such as the retelling of trauma – the process of fear between life, nature and mutilation/destruction. The camouflage installation brings the viewer as close as possible to feeling an imminent danger, the fear associated with it, and the effect this has on one's nerves. The exhibition space surrounding the camouflage installation has easels that present the phenomenon of shell shock, gas attacks, as well as an installation booth with the sounds of the front. Similar to Dresden's Military History Museum, the exhibition creates a structural network of connections, so that certain emotions appear frequently in different intensities throughout the exhibition.

In the last part of the exhibition, obstructed through thin black strings to create a mourning space, an installation presents a voice re-enactment from Käthe Kollwitz's diaries, mourning the death of her son Peter in the early days of World War I. There are numerous installations representing grief, mourning, and commemoration of the dead. The visitor works him- or herself through a structural experience of fear, loss, grief, and mourning. It is arguably as close as to a simulation of structural trauma as a museum space can get, unless the visitor transfers the museum representation into a personal story. For example, one veiled space depicts the 2012 discovery of a corpse, whose shape is drawn on the floor, accompanied by a German soldier's belongings, and a photograph of the actual discovery. The museum visitor could ask what they would feel if it were one of their relatives whose remains were discovered after 95 years.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is apparent that there are limits to representing trauma in the museum. There is the danger, which Wulf Kansteiner and others have pointed out, that a generalized notion of cultural trauma in a metaphorical sense "turns us all into accomplished survivors" (194) and risks conflating victims, perpetrators, and spectators (214). This paper is too focused on museum representation to go deeply into the discussion about the transmissibility of trauma. On the other hand, it has shown here that the search for traumatic expression becomes relevant to the medium of the museum when it targets the simulation of structural trauma, as well as visitor impressions that produce and repeat moments of unease and anxiety. Here, trauma can be seen in Roger Luckhorst's words as a "switching center" or "nodal point" between numerous scientific, economic, historical, and political discourses: "There is a reason for the strange transmissibility of trauma: it is inherent in the knotty history and circulation of the concept itself." (Luckhorst 203).

The difference between the Canadian museums and the German museums/exhibition analyzed in this article is that the former are shaped by strong linear master narratives towards national identity or towards a better future, whereas the German ones do not use a strong interpretive or narrative filter. This allows for structural

simulation of trauma or traumatic events, since the paradox between realness and representation does not need to be solved. It also makes possible more universal experiences that can be read through a human lens, not just that of one specific national group. Reshaping trauma into history and/or memory, German and Canadian museums remain strongly influenced by national memory politics (cf. Violi for the relation of trauma site museum and memory politics). The effect of both Canadian museums, especially the CMHR, is that collective structural and simulated trauma must be Canadian (even though the positive human rights story with a progressive idea of the future and the role-model narrative are more universal), as seen above in the analysis of the Holocaust film.

A brief look at two indigenous exhibits in the "Canadian Journey" gallery further demonstrates the particular challenges the CMHR encounters in expressing or reflecting upon trauma. The film centred in the Residential school booth – which has also been added as a second main film in the gallery's movie theatre – expresses the ongoing traumatic experiences of the removal of children from their homes, traditions and cultures. This film allows for the narration of survivor stories, and unlike in the Japanese-Canadian case, a political apology is not presented as the end point of the reconciliation process. The booth "A Nation Reclaimed: Asserting Métis Rights" is the most interesting, in terms of expressing trauma in the museum, though the narrative text of the booth once again highlights a historical moment when the Métis were recognized as one of Canada's three aboriginal peoples in 1982 and marks before and after in a process of asserting rights, apparently not dealing with trauma. However, the booth is predominated by a mixed media installation by Sherry Farrell Racette from 2014, entitled "We are not birds: Stories of Resistance and Survival." It contains textile collage, soundscape, and carved wall panels, bringing three-dimensional features of maps together with woven images, legal notices, and drawings, as well as handwritten text. On the left side is a wall panel and textile collage relating to the appropriation of 1.4 million acres of Métis land in the Manitoba Act of 1870 and to the North-West Rebellion of 1885; on the right side is a representation of the grandchildren's fight for more rights and reconciliation from 1938 to 2013. A sound installation of music and voices that remember atrocities, injustices, and the claiming of rights and identity fills the booth. The middle wall features a Métis beadwork painting by Christi Belcourt from 2002, symbolizing respectful co-existence of Indigenous and European peoples. Whereas it is certainly possible to read the booth in a linear fashion, from atrocity and injustice, to increasing rights and identity claims, the installation maintains the presence of the experiences of traumatic events over time. Looking at two woven photograph-like drawings, showing women with white cloth around their heads who are fleeing from the battlefield in 1885 and who are protecting their children, are haunting images that depict both, a lively spirit and resistance, as well as the traumatic experience of Métis life in Canada. Visitors see the importance of asserting rights, however, trauma remains present. In this way, the

exhibit allows for an understanding of the complexities of human rights violations, trauma, and reconciliation, and that the process of asserting rights cannot be taken for granted. Visitors are also challenged through the cartographic installation to imagine their own position on seized land. This has the potential to create empathetic unsettlement. Consequently, the exhibit comes closest to the expression of traumatic historical events of all installations in the CMHR. To create an emotional relationship between historical trauma and the visitor, museums need a presentist approach that does not preclude the interpretation of a story. Such an approach should delete trauma through narrative and express hope for a better future, while still allowing the story to affect the visitor. This would allow for an affective connection, which would in turn maintain the realness of trauma while it is represented in a museum.

Notes

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2 Clark highlights the performative promise and hope in 'trauma tourism.'

3 I am grateful to Erin Johnston-Weiss with whom I had many productive discussions about museums and 'difficult knowledge,' leading up to our co-authored presentation: "How to Represent Difficult Knowledge in the Second Decade of the 21st Century? Atrocities between Past, Present, and Future in German and Canadian National Museums." Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for University Teachers in German (CAUTG), University of Ottawa, Ottawa, 31 May 2015.

4 One could argue that indigenous trauma presents – to a certain extent– an exception in the CMHR. See the conclusion of this article for a brief discussion of this argument.

5 *The People's Commisariat for International Affairs* [Народный комиссариат внутренних дел, *Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*] (NKVD) was the leading Soviet secret police organization from 1934 to 1946. It carried out the Great Purge under Joseph Stalin.

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The Trauma of the After Space
Ethics, Absences, and Anselm Kiefer[1]

Katherine E. Walton

During his acceptance speech for the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 2008, Anselm Kiefer describes the initial stages of his artistic process: "It begins in the dark after an intense experience, a shock. At first, it is an urge, a pounding. You don't know what it is, but it compels you to act. And, at first, it is very vague. It must be vague, otherwise it would just be a visualization of the shock experience." (201). It goes without saying that Kiefer is one artist whose *oeuvre* follows the profound cultural traumas of twentieth-century history, yet it is worthwhile to remark upon just how often his works respond to the shock of that history. Kiefer's *oeuvre* is patently retrospective. Throughout his now fifty-year career, the artist has consistently demonstrated an urge to 'act after a shock,' to reflect upon the past and the memory of the past through the experience of present traumas, a calling that has been discussed by Andreas Huyssen in the terms of Kiefer's national identity as a German born at the end of World War II (210–211). There exists in Kiefer's works the sense of a need for more than "a visualization of the shock experience," a need for meaning in order to come to terms with the shock of the Holocaust and its aftermath in German and western culture. As Theodor Adorno so influentially stated, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (34), and since then this thought has been extended to a wider realm of artistic expression. Yet Kiefer's works explore that forbidden territory and they exhibit his keen awareness of the power of that traumatic history, where in response to history they function simultaneously as responses to and bearers of historical trauma. Indeed, much of Kiefer's subject matter can be seen to reflect upon the effects of trauma within his contemporary socio-cultural and political circumstances, and narratives surrounding Holocaust histories and traumas are discernable features in many of his works. The effort to come to terms with those histories remains at the root of an understanding of Kiefer's *oeuvre* as it explores the processes of time and memory and comments on a present space of traumatic experience.

Any discussion of traumatic events, however, must necessarily consider an ethics of representation. There exists a responsibility in the representation of historical traumas to preserve dignity for victims of violence as well as to recognize the needs of those who survive as witnesses and as post-generational bearers of the trauma and even the guilt associated with its event. The ethical ramifications of a representation of trauma, then, have become points of contention within the fields of both historical and trauma studies. And while the history and memory of the events

surrounding the Holocaust in particular must be examined with special care to such ethical concerns, much scholarship is still in debate as to how this is to be done in a respectful and judicious manner due to the scale of the violence and the long-lasting effects of Holocaust traumas. Especially since the resurgence of interest in trauma studies during the last twenty-five years, traditional historicist approaches which seek to ascribe documentary narratives to these events based upon factual, evidentiary truth-claims have become increasingly inadequate. Academic inquiry into the psychological effects of trauma has led to a yoking of psychoanalytic, philosophical, and historical methodologies which yield a multitude of differing discursive approaches, and thereby offer greater insight into the workings of trauma upon individual and collective experiential levels.

In consideration of Kiefer's artistic practice, I want to suggest that his works avoid many of the ethical pitfalls associated with the representation of trauma by way of what I identify as a referential, rather than re-presentational, visual style. Kiefer's works convey and commune with trauma through complex, intertextual narrative references to the historical discourses surrounding its event. Central to such conversation is the artist's use of memory and memory cues both visual and conceptual which recall histories into present spaces. Marina Warner writes in her curatorial essay for Kiefer's 2010 New York exhibition *Next Year in Jerusalem* that Kiefer is "an artist of memory, and his work … belongs in the large category of monument and memorial," as "anti-monuments, traumatic markers" (9). As bearers of the memory of a traumatic past, they explore an initial, historical "shock experience," indeed they mark it, even become monuments to it, yet they do not directly represent or reproduce that traumatic event itself. The visual abstractions and narrative fragments at play within Kiefer's works create representational absences, and the resultant ambiguity adds layers of possible meanings like so many layers of paint. At work here is a process which emulates the psychological effects associated with the historical, temporal, and mnemonic processes that qualify an experience of trauma. To consider Cathy Caruth's terminology, conceptual and representational "gaps" (1995, 7) left open within the artworks themselves function as analogues for the historical and temporal space in which sensations of trauma proliferate following a traumatic event – a kind of "after space" which signifies the belated nature of trauma as a mnemonic process. In such a space, there exists an increased capacity for meaningful experience through engagement with the historical narratives upon which the works reflect, where we may find traces of a palliative historical and cultural ethics which attributes meaning not to the Holocaust itself, but to the active exploration and interpretation of the traumatic experience that follows the event.

When we examine and record traumatic events, we encounter at the outset of our efforts a specific dilemma: trauma is itself paradoxical in nature. It functions as a disruptive force in individual psychological processes as well as in socio-cultural, collective environments, and as such it presents difficulties in attempts to understand

it and work through its effects. Even the vocabulary available to us through which we might discuss trauma is inherently flawed should we consider the traumatic condition from the position that psychological studies provide. Caruth's ongoing contributions to the field of trauma studies are especially noteworthy: working from the notion of an originating event, she asserts that trauma as a phenomenon occurs in separation from its initial stimulus, and hence it resists definition. According to Caruth, traumatic experience is a process "of re-enactment and repetition" (2008, 150) where traumas return only after in later, psychological reoccurrences (1995, 4). As separate events and experiences, we might consider the traumatic condition as a process of initial forgetting and later recalling:

> The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all. And it is this inherent latency of the event that paradoxically explains the peculiar, temporal structure, the belatedness, of historical experience: since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time. (7–8)

Caruth's work in the passage above marks a kind of dialectical temporal relationship between past and present, where both unfold at once within the moment of an experience of trauma. Trauma is a "void" of experience, a "collapse of its understanding," "a gap" that countervails the "immediacy" of the initial event (7). This "gap" pertains to the temporal shift between past and present events equally as to the loss of a remembered experience – a loss which revenges itself in uncontrolled resurgences of memory after the initial stimulus, or that which has set the traumatic process into motion, and continues to exert power and influence over the present. Experiential traumatic phenomena thus work as immediate and retrospective processes, where the forgotten initial event later fills the metaphorical space of its own absence, and disrupts the present with a past experience, one drawn from previously present disruptive traumatic stimulus.

The traumas which have followed the close of the events surrounding the Holocaust are expressly problematic due to the sensitivity of the matter. The very nature of trauma defies a "closing" of events, and the historical narratives surrounding the Holocaust continue to be discussed in the search for an ethical means of understanding its event. Our understanding of history, however, has been fragmented by trauma, and in his book *Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics* (2000), Berel Lang addresses the problems posed by a history that comes after Holocaust trauma:

> If the narrative-dependence of facts holds in general, then for any particular narrative and its derivative 'facts' an alternative 'pre-existing' narrative might produce other, very

> possibly contradictory 'facts.' … Not only is history only accessible in variant, sometimes conflicting narratives but nothing that the narratives tell or talk about is exempt. (89–90)

It is at best painfully difficult, and perhaps even impossible, to provide a single, accurate, and ethical narrative account of Holocaust events. The very historical discipline which theretofore had shaped a human understanding of time and of memory was subjected to a "shock," where objective histories and truth-claims became not only inadequate, but, to consider Walter Benjamin's historical materialist philosophy, failed to recognize the realities of human experience, realities that have the potential to establish a kind of connectivity between present and past which Benjamin poignantly describes as living moments brought forth out of linear time (77). Kiefer's own approach considers the historical-traumatic condition, where the work of art exhibits a similar fragmentation: during his 2008 speech, he suggests that art remains always in some way "unfinished and deficient" (202). Only in association "with something else that is itself incomplete, such as history, nature, or natural history," can art enter into the world as an object (202). But this object-state is momentary, since the work is an expression of a single moment in time; it is a composite of all of its creative "opportunities," options taken and not taken (202). The "finished" work, then, can at any time "fall back into the state of material," back into its undetermined and unrealized potential (203). What Kiefer describes is a "cycle" (203), where artworks like narratives like histories undulate, making and unmaking themselves, never fully able to achieve a linear finitude, since the very creative and conceptual media through which they enter into the world circle back onto themselves in a complex of possibilities.

Kiefer's works are indicative of an attempt to outline an appropriate mode through which to handle the trauma of history – one that still has yet to be entirely determined. Kiefer's approach, which is tangled in the dissonant voices of historical memory and interdisciplinary debate, has long been a contentious point for scholars and critics due to its interpretive impetus. We might thus consider Lang's principal inquiry of whether "there any special limitations or demands that the character of the Holocaust does or should impose upon its historical representation" (2000, 84)? This query takes into account how art can represent the Holocaust while simultaneously respecting its victims and avoiding its justification or re-creation within the context of a present historical space. Moreover, in depicting Holocaust events, artistic products confront the very real possibility of social and cultural transgression in their potential to deform those events through pleasure in aesthetic viewing or moral ambiguity. Lang offers one possible answer to such anxieties: he argues that an ethics of artistic representation in the context of the Holocaust is best supported by the practice of historical accuracy. Lang considers non-literal representation as "intrinsically personal," that is, dependent upon the artist's own, inevitably subjective existence. This form of art, for Lang, is troubling when applied to the historical

context of the Holocaust, since it transfigures its subject, and if it does not beautify it, it does, in any case, seek to "improve" (164) it. He concludes that

> the most effective artistic representations of the Holocaust have either directly appropriated the rhetorical forms of history rather than those of art or, just as explicitly, assumed the event of the Holocaust as a historical given, appropriated from outside the realm of art to serve as a basis for the artistic response. (164–165)

Lang here seems to return to the notion of a traditional historical approach, one that, with its claim to factual transparency and truth, may transmit shared information in an objective fashion so as to avoid "*mis*representation" (Lang's emphasis 164), which may indeed occur through subjective depictions and analyses that attribute meaning beyond the scope of Holocaust history and the discourses that circumscribe appropriate responses to its event. According to Caruth, however, for those suffering from trauma it is the "literality" of the repeated historical event which "constitutes trauma" itself (1995, 5). We may recall the documentary photography captured during and after World War II as examples of the form of representation to which I refer in this paper, images which can be brought to memory by most successive generations. Marianne Hirsch worries that these images, shown repetitively by media sources and in pedagogical exercise, have become iconic and objectified (7–8). Serving only as "decontextualized memory cue[s]" that distance later generations from historical events through negative experiential identification, these images re-traumatize viewers and cause them to reject reflection upon the histories from which they are drawn (7–8). An alternative referential approach, which I see in Kiefer's works, addresses the issue at the heart of both Lang's and Hirsch's arguments. Kiefer's works, while laden with meaning, are puzzles that require knowledge so that their absences and ambiguities do not result in "voids" of meaning. Kiefer thus makes use of the "rhetorical forms of history" in his works through visual and discursive citations of Holocaust events as "historical givens." He does so, however, through the forms of art, through abstractions which become memory cues, themselves reliant upon historical knowledge. Indeed, when placed into their historical contexts, the artist's works serve to encourage interpretation and reflection where representation might distance or even repulse viewers as only "shock" imagery.

Nonetheless, Kiefer's works are intensely challenging, both to the historical framework into which the artist inserts them, and to their audiences who are tasked with the interpretive project. As Lang has also suggested, there exists a "large body of tacit knowledge of the Holocaust that both writers and visual artists assume in their audience but do not articulate themselves" (2009, 85). And "[u]nless certain stereotyped images are invoked (swastikas or railroad tracks leading into a barbed-wire opening or goose-stepping soldiers), the question becomes more difficult of why a viewer should recognize any particular work as related to the Holocaust" (86). Lang's observations, which he summarizes in the twin ideas of "omission and absence" (85),

are party to the wider concern of how one might convey ethically the historical event in all of its gravity – what happens when viewers miss the memory cues, or do not share the knowledge required for the interpretive process? Even though "the specific context may be vague or ambiguous," is it enough to experience the intended "effect" of a given work's presentation of, for example, a "people who are suffering or dying" (85), removed as that "effect" may be from its historical context? And is it even possible to respond to the work of art according to its intended effect should its context become separated from its intervention into an historical discourse? Kiefer's works seem to align equally with each position made available by such questions, their contexts, or their lack thereof, functioning as references to the challenges that individuals and cultures face when reflecting on historical events – events which in many ways have become "decontextualized" through an inherited traumatic condition and its related inability to access and understand the experiences of past generations.

The experience of that trauma itself, however, might offer a means of resolving those challenges presented by a wider traumatic-historical memory, since the artworks' reliance upon a tacit knowledge base for the production of meaning extends beyond any specific historical moment. As Dori Laub has found, narratives or histories of trauma "begin with someone who testifies to an absence, to an event that has not yet come into existence, in spite of the overwhelming and compelling nature of the reality of its occurrence" (57). Although knowledge of an historical context may be valuable in its own right when reflecting upon traumatic events, "[i]n the process of the testimony to a trauma, as in psychoanalytic practice, in effect, you often do not want to know anything except what the patient tells you, because what is important is the situation of *discovery* of knowledge – its evolution, and its very *happening*" (Laub's emphasis 62). Laub's analysis suggests that what is perhaps most significant in the exploration of trauma is that – while connected to an historical event, to recall Caruth's work – trauma is an event unto itself, and one that may disrupt established historical knowledge (60) to present new narratives in variable and multitudinous forms. In order for that trauma to "come into existence," like an historical event, it requires a witness: as much as the victim of a traumatic event bears the history from which the trauma originates, so too does the event of trauma require another to bear witness to its experience, where "the listener to a trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event" (57). For Kiefer, participation involves the creation of art: as Kiefer said during his lecture series entitled *Art Will Survive its Ruins (Die Kunst geht knapp nicht unter)*, art constitutes "the only possible reality" through which life may be assessed, explored, and generated anew: "the rubble of what was condenses to create new words, new spaces and new relationships" (201). Kiefer's works themselves both testify to a traumatic history and bear witness to the trauma of the historical space which comes after. Even should the work of art become separated from its immediate historical context, the meaning which it provides in its testimony serves to fill in the "gaps" which make an experience of trauma inac-

cessible, those cues left within the works, like resurgences of the belated traumatic memory, offering new forms of knowledge concerning not only the history to which they refer, but the experience of that history in a new time and space. Just as trauma escapes reality, escapes understanding into a mnemonic "void," Kiefer's works become repositories for or bearers of that trauma, situating a past event within a present space, moulding it into a form which can be understood through a multitude of potentially meaningful narratives. While their fragmentation indicates the tensions inherent to the traumatic condition equally as to the incomplete nature of history, Kiefer's works allow for the attribution of meaning to the experience of trauma itself through our own roles as witnesses and interpreters of those works, which fully exist only through our openness to their event.

Kiefer's Early Career: Traumatic Political Intervention

Kiefer's art began to appear publicly during the 1970s. It was through works produced during the early years of his career that Kiefer entered into contentious political ground concerned with the traumatic narratives of German history and the need for an established social discourse through which to handle those narratives following Holocaust events. Paul B. Jaskot describes the period's political climate using the terms of a generational conflict between survivors of the war and their children, where "[i]deological confrontation" came to "characterize … the struggles of the latter part of the [1960s] and on into the 1970s" (86). In addition to the increasingly violent student revolts of the late 1960s, (cf. 96–97) young artists and scholars were at this time exploring the remnants of fascist ideology within German culture, (see 88–89) their interest in the past a response to the dominant political trends to which Huyssen refers as "the conservative turn in German politics," the desire "to 'normalize' German history" (212) and to "forget the fascist past" (214).

Kiefer's photographic series *Besetzungen* (*Occupations*) (1969) directly confronts the political discourses contemporary to its release. Published as eighteen images in *Interfunktionen* magazine in 1975, in these photographs the artist positions himself before iconic landmarks or within iconic landscapes in Switzerland, France, and Italy. Standing alone in each frame, he performs the National Socialist Party's military salute. Upon their publication, the photographs were received as a stark reminder of the nationalistic attitudes that led to the violence and devastation of the recent past, and the series consequently received heated critical backlash – as Brett Ashley Kaplan puts it, "Kiefer was initially seen as 'tainted' by Nazi imagery and was almost universally denounced in Germany" (110). These images were and still are shocking: not only is the salute considered a criminal offence, but, as Huyssen remarks, Kiefer's early works "violate a taboo, transgress a boundary that had been carefully guarded, and not for bad reasons, by the postwar cultural consensus in West Ger-

many: abstention from the image world of fascism, condemnation of any cultural iconography even remotely reminiscent of those barbaric years" (214). At the time of their reception, then, the photographs became a part of the volatile political debates and the memories of a past that continued to inform social life.

It is owing to the political climate and the concomitant outrage with which Kiefer's *Occupations* series was met, though, that the photographs demonstrate the extent to which their artist was cognizant of the traumas to be found in his contemporary Germany. It is through this awareness that the work stages its traumatic political intervention. Huyssen argues that, for Kiefer, "[t]he issue … is not whether to forget or to remember, but rather how to remember and how to handle representations of the remembered past" (214). As Jürgen Habermas would write in 1988, recent historical events needed to be frankly assessed and then "relativized" to past and present cultural circumstances, a task that could produce a new "collective identity" (65). In *Occupations*, Kiefer attempts to negotiate a space of remembrance, where he internalizes and grapples with the traumatic event. Through this struggle, the work presents the belated experience of trauma itself as a basis for understanding a fragmented and politically contentious contemporary historical space. Kiefer's intervention functions as a form of resistance not only to the fascist past, but to the suppression of a fuller comprehension of the present as it is informed by the past. He makes the centre of the work the trauma itself, the outraged responses of his audience as a collective the means by which he draws attention to the onus to acknowledge the past so as not to repeat it – a dangerous method, considering the vehemence of the political debate and the ambiguous nature of the work, which seems to suggest that in some way fascist ideology subsists, or must subsist, within the world, if only in memory.

In one instance of *Occupations*, Kiefer positions himself before a body of water, and with his back turned to the camera he performs the salute. A reference to German Romanticism and the painter Caspar David Friedrich, Kiefer here re-imagines Friedrich's painting *The Monk by the Sea* (1808–1810). In Huyssen's words, fascism "perverted, abused, and sucked up whole territories of a German image-world, turning national iconic and literary traditions into mere ornaments of power and thereby leaving post-1945 culture with a tabula rasa that was bound to cause a smouldering crisis of identity" (217). Romantic painting during the nineteenth century was frequently received in terms of its nationalistic sentiments, where its celebration of the landscape functioned as a means of asserting German identity against French occupation and cultural suppression (Vaughan 210). Coupled with the artist's play on the word *Besetzung* – the context of which, explains Andrea Lauterwein, ranges from "a military operation and the casting of a play in the theatre," to "the Freudian concept known in English as 'cathexis,'" or the "accumulation of mental energy focused on an object, or a representation that is necessary for a sensation to be fixed in the memory" (32) – Kiefer here seems intent on exposing a history of occupation.

As much as German history and culture was occupied by its own identity, fascism exploited those concerns, occupied that history. The suppression of an historic national culture due to fascist abuse in turn manifests within the work of art as an occupation with the memory of that history. The artist himself occupies the resultant traumas through his embodiment of this paradigm and its present effects.

In consideration of Kiefer's *Occupations* as a whole, the young artist treats the subject of the past with a satiric eye, ironizing himself along with his topic in order to remove the sting of his commentary. As Huyssen puts it, though: "Are irony and satire really the appropriate mode for dealing with fascist terror? Doesn't this series of photographs belittle the very real terror which the Sieg Heil gesture conjures up for a historically informed memory?" (215). The ways in which the work plays on memory, on the terror of the past and its traumatic shock, the anger at its resurgence within the present, are not mutually exclusive with a devaluation of the very real horrors of history. Rather, in a self-reflexive manner, Kiefer harnesses his audiences' responses, their traumas, in an attempt to disrupt the trauma narrative and to call attention to the disruption itself. Although his body bears fascist ideology in his salute, direct representations of war and of genocide are absent from each photograph. The landscapes are devoid of human figures; only one body recalls the past into the present. Indeed, the absence of representational figures overshadows his body, and just as Kiefer's symbolic action proliferates in the series' repetitive performances, so too does this absence – the "gap" between referent and representation, between the body as ideological icon and the horrific end of such ideology, grows more striking through the repetitive quality of the work. As much as the memory of the initial event is recalled into the present, then, that event is, paradoxically, firmly sealed into the past by the artist's performance. Kiefer shows that the fascist world no longer exists; it is absent, only present in each photograph as a memory. He thus recalls a history that haunts the present, while simultaneously pointing to its condition as history, as a revenant that has power over the present, but exerts that power through memory and the interpretation of memory through the narratives accorded to it within the present. Although such memory might give the past a second life, the work as a whole suggests that a critical view of history can serve as a compass in a space where political tensions and cultural traumas fragment the collective. The work also urges viewers to examine the present critically, to understand that history and the memory of history have a place in a world struggling to define an appropriate mode of life following a past which it cannot accept.

Towards Abstraction: Absence as Presence

As Kiefer's artistic process matured, his works began to demonstrate a thoroughly referential visual style. Indeed, a retrospective analysis of Kiefer's *oeuvre* suggests

that the strikingly confrontational quality found in the *Occupations* series is somewhat anomalous when contrasted with those works that follow its publication. It is in the works from these years that we can trace the roots of Kiefer's larger project of understanding history, one which visually and conceptually incorporates narrative fragments drawn from a wider range of sources and in turn makes possible a more nuanced commentary on the traumas which the works themselves embody.

Kiefer's *Ausbrennen des Landkreises Buchen* (*The Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen*) (1974) marks an early foray into the realm of conceptual abstraction, where some of the concerns raised in *Occupations* are explored in greater detail. Here too the artist builds connections to the past through the Romantic landscape while simultaneously integrating narratives from his contemporary geographical and social circumstances in order to explore both past and present traumas. For *Cauterization*, the artist bound into book form a series of black-and-white photographs which, Matthew Biro notes, Kiefer had taken when exploring the region surrounding Hornbach, where he lived (see 22). These photographs capture the likenesses of turned ground, fallow fields, and dirt roads which stretch into the distance to meet with horizons punctuated by trees. In the final pages, however, Kiefer imagines the landscape transformed: a fire breaks out and releases thick clouds of smoke which rain ashes upon the earth. The final pages are washed black: an application of iron oxide (cf. 36) congeals and cracks to resemble a heated and blistered layer of soil. Lauterwein argues that at this time Kiefer was developing a thematic treatment of the Romantic notions of "blood and soil" (134) and the related importance of a connection to the physical landscape; in the hands of the National Socialist Party, these principles became a program for a racialist and nationalist ideology, which Lauterwein describes as a "contamination" of the historical and cultural landscapes (134). The work is similarly considered according to the scorched earth military strategy that ravaged the countryside and destroyed the livelihoods of its citizens (136), while its title recalls the horrors of the camps, one having been named "Buchenwald" in 1937 (137). It also, however, positions such narratives within the present, layering historical details like iron oxide wash over the landscape as it was when the work was produced. *Cauterization* presents only a landscape left traumatized by an unspecified destructive event; it is through its play on its viewers' memories that the work's effect recalls Holocaust traumas. Through an interconnected series of historical narratives, then, the artist links the trauma of a scarred landscape to that of a present space as it has been shaped by Holocaust narratives – fragments which themselves have been connected by narrative discourse to past events, and that when recalled by memory point to a self-perpetuating cycle of traumatic human experience.

When Kiefer included *Cauterization* in his exhibition for the 1980 Venice Biennale, his work was criticized as previously. Some of the harshest commentaries were focused on his ambiguous moral stance, which left critics with the sense that his works contained a fascist nationalism (cf. Huyssen 212–213), or otherwise that the

artist's "interest in the irrational without respect for its effects on an audience" was "negative and dangerously confrontational" (Jaskot 107). Yet *Cauterization* is not as confrontational as *Occupations*, and as R. H. Fuchs's observation in his catalogue of Kiefer's participation in the exhibition suggests, there seems to be more of an absence than a presence of any direct visual connection in *Cauterization* to a fascist past. The interpretation that Fuchs does offer is that Kiefer's primary concern in imagining a fire in Buchen – which, as an agricultural district, no longer existed – was to draw attention to reform activity within the region, since large quantities of petrol were allowed to remain enclosed in a nearby military warehouse (6). Here we are much closer than in *Occupations* to Lang's query about how a work of art is to be recognized as Holocaust art. Nonetheless, the work was and continues to be woven into contemporary Holocaust narratives – the "effect" of his work, removed as it may be from Holocaust representation, at the time caused outrage for its assumed connection to a fascist past and has since inspired critical reflection on Holocaust events and their traumatic outcome within the society, culture, and politics of a present space.

Moreover, there is something about healing in *Cauterization* that is intensely poignant considering the various narratives with which it has been associated. No longer does the artist insert himself into the work as a bearer of trauma; rather, the work itself bears that trauma as a "traumatic marker," as an embodiment of its own reality within the trauma of history. In this way, as much as the artist makes use of his immediate surroundings in his creative process, be they geographical, sociocultural, historical, or political, these surroundings become the focus of his project. We might read this in Kiefer's revision of *Cauterization* a year later in seven volumes by the same title, where he cut and burned already completed paintings and bound them into books (Biro 22). Just as Kiefer cauterizes the landscape in his photographs, which function as metaphors for the traumas contemporary to the work's creation, here the artist cauterizes the work of art, the act of cauterization a painful process of healing marked by the agony of closing a wound, a physically traumatic procedure often only performed if necessary to avoid more serious medical complications.[2] Although the work of art is a ruin of its previous state, through the act of cauterization Kiefer shapes it into a new form. This is a process which gestures towards the transformative potential in the experience of trauma – although the work of art is subject to destructive forces, the artist makes use of that same destruction as means for creation.

Although a thematic of healing has gone largely undiscussed in analyses of Kiefer's works, it is party to the ethical debate into which the works intervene. While in his works his stance on whether or not healing after Holocaust history is ultimately possible remains decidedly ambiguous, Kiefer nonetheless explores how the traumatic condition might contribute to a process of healing. In his painting *Eisen-Steig* (*Iron Path*) (1986), against an abstracted, flat landscape scene with a high horizon line, at-

tached to the canvas are lead and iron strips, positioned so as to resemble train tacks which recede into a distant vanishing point. While these tracks, as memory cues, are striking in and of themselves for their power to recall concentration camp narratives, what is perhaps most present in the work is the sense of loss: absent are any signs of life, any movement or activity. The landscape and the tracks are empty; only memory informs the scene with what end might wait beyond the horizon. Indeed, it is the presence of that memory that the painting explores. As James E. Young suggests, in the loss that follows the Holocaust, the absence of peoples and of cultures haunts the present, and the experience of this loss transforms absence into a form of presence through memory, imagination, and discourse (cf. 870). Much like the haunting power of a trauma, the idea of an absence is given a narrative and it fills its own space, its own absence, so as to make present the "loss itself" (873).

Despite Kiefer's continued commentary on Holocaust traumas, it was during this period of his career that his work began to be lauded by a critical audience that only half a decade previously had responded with hostility and disgust. Jaskot explains that during the mid-1980s critical attention moved "away from generational conflict or shocking subject matter. Instead, [critics] emphasized more universal interpretations that focused on the symbolic social import of [Kiefer's] paintings." (108). Kiefer was thus presented to the public by his reviewers as "a neutral participant who records and externalizes the important emotional conditions of his audience" (107). Huyssen outlines this condition as a melancholic turn in the period's wider social context, one which Kiefer's works came to reflect as his artistic practice matured:

> Kiefer's work makes visible a psychic disposition dominant in postwar Germany that has been described as the inability to mourn. If mourning implies an active working through of a loss, then melancholy is characterized by an inability to overcome that loss and in some instances even a continuing identification with the lost object of love. (222–223)

At the same time, however, this turn suggests a wider effort to work through the loss, to understand the "gap" between states of trauma and reconciliation. If a remembered history survives as an open wound, there seems to appear at this time a desire to determine an appropriate method through which to, at the very least, explore that wound. Mourning was at this time becoming a means through which loss could be acknowledged and traumas understood, although such public events as the 1985 memorial ceremony at the Bitburg military cemetery have been considered as political manoeuvrings which foster a derelict attitude towards the past (Jaskot 120–122). Young describes this trend as "the traditional forms of and reasons for public memorial art, those spaces that either console viewers or redeem such tragic events, either indulging in a kind of [reparation] or purporting to mend the memory of a murdered people" (858). Together, melancholy and mourning present something of a stalemate, where remembrance constitutes a potentially dangerous

fixation upon the past, while closure risks the ethical irresponsibility of forgetting or downplaying historical events.

Kiefer's art, like the popular discourse which accepted it, nonetheless suggests that a need to mourn exists in order to "externalize" and work through trauma as a loss. Indeed, *Iron Path* contains an additional memory cue which suggests an attitude of mourning. In the painting's foreground, attached transversely to the tracks are olive branches. These branches function in their traditional Biblical sense as symbols of reconciliation and peace; together, the cues are reminiscent of a grave marked by mournful offerings and they indicate the performance of a ritual of grief which seeks to bring closure to past events. This is, however, a palliative process intimately engaged with the paradoxical nature of Holocaust traumas – one that explores the tension between the melancholic and mourning states which have been associated with the period's wider socio-historical position. The work at once emphasizes the temporal quality of the Holocaust through its representational absences, effectively locating that event within the past, and rejects the notion of forgetting through its play on the presence of loss and of the memory of that loss. Similarly, while the work may attempt to find a kind of peace in the memory of the past, it also recognizes the belated nature of grief and the related inadequacies of reconciliation – it recognizes the "gap" between trauma and reconciliation, that desire for and impossibility of reconciliation and closure. The work does not, as Young has written on traditional memorial art, "do our memory work for us" (585). Instead, it demonstrates the tensions inherent in the traumatic memory and reflects upon a loss which occupies that memory. *Iron Path* could thusly be described as, to recall Warner's words, an "anti-monument" (9), or in Young's, a "counter-monument," one of those "painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being" (858). Perhaps as it should, then, the memory that the tracks symbolize overshadows the olive branches, which are barely visible against the abstracted background. As a pithy and even self-consciously unsatisfactory gesture, however, the branches suggest that mourning after the shock of the past can adopt an ethical relation to history: although an ethical means of resolution remains uncertain, the exploration of the loss itself provides a way through which historical experience informs an understanding of the trauma which follows. In so doing, *Iron Path* does not turn away from the past, but turns towards the future, towards what might come of mourning, through its reflection upon the traumas of a present space.

Revising the Past: Present and Future Traumas

Kiefer's later works exhibit a greater range of historical references, from alchemical processes and classical mythologies to Judeo-Christian spiritualities and kabbalistic thought. As Warner suggests, during this more recent period of his career, Kiefer

"universalize[s] himself" (11), yet his later explorations consistently build upon the topics with which he engaged during the first two decades of his artistic practice. Already in the mid-1980s, and roughly contemporaneous with the production of *Iron Path*, Kiefer was introducing to his practice a wider symbology through which he would continue to develop his historical thematics. The symbols that Kiefer draws from these expanded historical references are those which concern transformation – an idea through which he treats trauma with an eye towards the tensions that produce a very human desire for transcendence.

Kiefer's *Glaube*, *Hoffnung*, *Liebe* (*Faith*, *Hope*, *Love*) (1984–1986) is one of many works which feature his repeating motif of a leaden aircraft. For Kiefer, aircrafts are loaded with historical significance: in conversation with Michael Auping, Kiefer explains that, throughout human history, aircrafts have frequently symbolized "ambitions of transcendence or military power" (172). As in *Iron Path*, paint is layered onto the canvas to create an abstracted landscape with a horizon at its head. A lead airplane propeller juts out from the centre of this composition, its spokes cutting across packed earth and waves crashing in the distance. The propeller functions here as a kind of visual synecdoche for an airplane, which symbolizes a spiritual desire for flight, for the transcendence of time, space, and history, which Kiefer frames as the search "for new beginnings" (Auping 171), for a "Heaven" that "is an idea, a piece of ancient internal knowledge" (168). Yet Kiefer's planes are paradoxically flightless. For Alex Danchev, Kiefer's plane entitled *Der Engel der Geschichte: Mohn und Gedächtnis* (*The Angel of History: Poppy and Memory*) (1989), its wings weighted with lead books and dried poppy flowers, is "the most powerful artistic re-imagining" of Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus* (1920), an image which figures in Walter Benjamin's *Theses* (377). Kiefer's plane captures the tension of which Benjamin speaks, of the angel's unceasing flight into the future and his simultaneous vision of the past as ruins proliferating beneath his gaze, while the work's title refers also to Paul Celan's poetry (see Huyssen 239), which has frequently been associated with Holocaust traumas due to the author's Jewish heritage and his experience as both a victim and survivor of the concentration camps. These mock aircrafts and their "ambitions of transcendence" are brought to ground by their leaden state, the desire for flight thwarted by history itself, Huyssen suggests (cf. 228). In *Faith*, *Hope*, *Love*, the aircraft is thoroughly dismantled, its ruins cast onto the earth, its remains those of a traumatic marker. Only the propeller reminds the viewer of the dream of flight.

Far from being emptied of meaning by its fragmented state, however, Kiefer's treatment of the propeller affords it with a certain symbolic power – one which offers an ethos for the future. Lead functions in Kiefer's works as a potent metaphor for transformation. As an alchemical agent, it was believed that lead could be transformed into gold, could transcend its base state to achieve a pure one. Auping reads the symbolic value of lead in Kiefer's works as "the metallic equivalent of humankind" (37), and Kiefer's alchemical use of it as "an allegory of humankind's attempt

to escape earthly boundaries" (39). The propeller thus functions in a dual capacity, at once a reference to humankind and humankind's ambitions, as well as to the temporal, spatial, and historical framework which humans seek to transcend. Like the propeller, humanity and history are fragmented and cast down to the earth in ruins, where the idea of transcendence is left unrealized – hence Auping associates lead with the melancholic temperament (39), that inability to overcome a loss. Nonetheless, although the propeller seems to ground the human spirit, onto it the artist inscribes three words: faith, hope, love. These are Pauline virtues, otherwise known as the three theological virtues (cf. 1 Cor 13:13). Indeed, Kiefer's *oeuvre* is filled with works which "evoke the sacred without any open adherence to a particular manifestation of it" (Warner 21). These theological words become another kind of ground, a universalized one from which variable and multitudinous historical narratives shape a future where traumas might begin to heal. While the history of a traumatic past may suggest that such virtues have been lost, have been made absent by horrific events both violent and barbaric, like the inscription on a grave, the writing on the propeller indicates what learning and legacy might be had from the ruins of the past. Although Kiefer recognizes that hope "must be combined with irony, and more important, scepticism" when considering "the dark weight of history" (Auping 166), the spiritualism with which Kiefer is concerned is one which draws from history in order to charge a present space with *Faith*, *Hope*, *Love*. As Kiefer's works suggest, their presence is not without a critical imperative, yet these are necessary qualities within a traumatic after space. Warner concludes that "after Auschwitz, it is still possible to make art" (21), and it is an art like Kiefer's that finds means to navigate the ethical aporia surrounding its traumatic event.

As works rooted in the traumatic history of Holocaust events, Kiefer's art continues to engage with related narratives and the traumas still prevalent within an after space. For his 2010 exhibition *Next Year in Jerusalem*, Kiefer reconstructed *Occupations*: he printed those photographs along with ones not included in the initial publication on expansive lead sheets, then hung them tightly together in an imposing steel container (see Warner 15). The life-size images, proportionately much larger than those of the original series, are enclosed by the steel structure, which itself is surrounded by large vitrines showcasing sculptures that refer to classical mythology and kabbalistic mysticism: in *Danae* (2010), a tall, dried sunflower rains golden seeds down onto books constructed from lead sheets, while in *Merkaba* (2010), the broken body of a small, lead airplane embodies the notion of the divine chariot which in kabbalistic meditation symbolizes the inner journey through the seven heavenly spheres of the Hechaloth, with the revelation of God at its end (see Auping 175). Moreover, the plane in *Merkaba* is draped with photographic strips of towers built with lead sheets – enormous structures which were included in Kiefer's installation *Die Sieben Himmelspaläste* (*The Seven Heavenly Palaces*) (2004–2015). Surrounded by symbols that reach into the past and the future, Kiefer's revision of *Occupations*

positions its history between rich cultural analogues, while the exhibition space as a whole suggests that Kiefer's history is a syncretic one, compiled from many narrative fragments. As much as the memory of the Holocaust continues to occupy this space, a present space where histories multiply and converge, the artist's intervention into the traumatic narrative here is enclosed, both by the steel container and the artist's other works. Although, suggests Warner, "[t]his assemblage of works refuses to allow the memory of Fascism to be quiet" (15), that memory is constrained in such a way so as to censor the repetition of an historical memory. The doors of the steel structure remain open, affording glimpses of the young artist's performance, yet his body, the bearer of traumatic discourse, now is transformed, fragmented, and subjected to a different kind of "gap." Rather than a re-presentation of the initial *Occupations*, this version seems to mark the progression of time, where memories circle back onto themselves and discourses and attitudes towards history, like the tensions found in the traumatic condition, change in circumstance, yet somehow hold on to the kernel of that "shock experience."

As a work produced sixty-five years after Holocaust events, and forty after its initial publication, Kiefer's 2010 revision of *Occupations* identifies Holocaust history as one not forgotten, nor reduced, but rather as one which survives amongst a manifold of histories, as one part of a wider human experience which continues to be interpreted in and opened to different narratives, different modes of thought and critical considerations. Of this history, Kiefer devotes his practice to the exploration and interpretation of the traumatic experience that follows its event, and through his works, traumatic memory becomes party to a palliative historical and cultural ethics, in all of its resurgences in and reoccupations of a space which comes after. In Warner's words, Kiefer's works function as "traumatic markers," as monuments not with the aim to forget a painful past, but as memoranda from a present space which bear a history of trauma for a future that continues to grapple with its relation to the ruins of its past. As much as Kiefer's art is an art of trauma, an art of paradox and of pain, it is also one of healing and of transformation, which surmounts the difficulty of producing art within an after space precisely by accepting the limitations and adopting the qualities of that space – by virtue of its retrospection, Kiefer's *oeuvre* gives voice to the history of the present, which in its belated form, if Kiefer's career attests to the compulsions and motivations of his time, has a need for more than "a visualization of the shock experience." While his works suggest that after the Holocaust human experience must always exist within an after space, Kiefer's practice shows that the boundaries of this space shift and change as time and history do. The absences and ambiguities which seem inherent to this space are, in Kiefer's works, paradoxically given form; that darkness "after an intense experience, a shock," that trauma, is itself a means through which those narratives that fragment history and the memory of history might be reclaimed for a present space, where not only traumas, but possibilities proliferate. As the title of his lecture series suggests, in Kiefer's

oeuvre, the work of art survives its ruins. To extend that analogy, Kiefer's works offer the hope that through an active exploration of traumatic experience and a critical engagement with the historical past, so too might an after space bear through the traumas of its history.

Notes

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2 The title *Ausbrennen des Landkreises Buchen* has been alternately translated in English as "*The Burning of the Rural District of Buchen*" and "*The Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen*." I would like to thank Professor Hartmut Lutz for pointing out that the original title of the work and the word *Ausbrennen* connotes a feeling far more deeply painful than the English word "burning" can convey.

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Trauma and Taboo
The Holocaust in Recent American Fiction

Susanne Rohr

What are the consequences of, or what are the next steps following a substantial breach in taboo within artistic practice? Does it create a compulsion to continually push the taboo boundaries, to out-perform the taboo as it was, or does the ultimate provocation initiate a desire and movement towards reconciliation, or placidity? It is these questions I would like to address here[1] as I track the latest developments in a highly sensitive genre, a genre that the philosopher Slavoj Žižek has termed "Holocaust comedy" or "camp comedy." I would like to focus on the literary form of the genre, and in particular, I would like to engage in a closer analysis of three American novels of the past decade. My questions here are: what changes are made manifest within what is still considered by many to be a scandalous art form, and in which ways do the direction taken by this art form and the strategies it adopts need to be contextualized? And finally: how does trauma figure in these novels, what are the aesthetic strategies employed to represent trauma, and how have these strategies changed? The three novels, I argue, represent three distinct and meaningful stages of development along the arc of this direction: they are Melvin Jules Bukiet's *After* (1996), Tova Reich's *My Holocaust* (2007) and Shalom Auslander's *Hope: A Tragedy* (2012).

While the 'crisis of representation,' that is, the debate on whether the horrific events of the Holocaust could at all be represented, had been raging for decades after the Shoah, there appeared to be uniform consensus that associating the topic of the Holocaust with the genre of comedy was not only tasteless but inconceivable. However, like a dark gravitational force, this ban proved to be an irresistible attraction for artistic license when, in the 1990s, the decisive break took place and the first Holocaust comedies appeared.

In addition to Melvin Jules Bukiet's novel *After*, the earliest examples include Roberto Benigni's film *Life Is Beautiful* from 1997, a film, by the way, which Žižek references in his discussion on "camp comedy," as well as the Romanian director Radu Mihăileanu's film *Train of Life* from 1998. While this genre was initially met with suspicion, it did experience a breakthrough with Benigni's film, which would go on to garner international acclaim and win numerous awards, including an Oscar. While the Holocaust comedy had now been able to internationally establish itself as a form of artistic expression, it was by no means an undisputed genre – as

the discomfort or disgust, even when laughter is associated with horror, remained too palpable for a large number of people.

The question "Can the Shoah Be Funny?," posed by Sander Gilman in the year 2000 in a heavily-cited essay, is still controversial, and is concerned with the central issue of the inextricable intertwinement of ethics and aesthetics: What is funny about the Holocaust, and who is allowed to put comedy in this context into practice? Should these works evoke laughter, and who is allowed to laugh?[2] That these issues will be answered differently according to demographic factors such as age and nationality is obvious. But even here, the positions have changed dramatically since the 1990s.[3]

Taboo and Transgression

The question of why these radical developments came about in parallel both transnationally and in various media in the 1990s has been much debated, and different explanations have been pursued. As these debates are well known, however, only a few cornerstones will be presented here.

Seen from a sociological point of view, the transformation can be initially explained by a change in generations. The generation of those directly affected, as either victims or perpetrators, was replaced by their descendants, meaning: immediately remembered history transitioned into "media memory" (cf. Kitch 175–184). The distance, then, to the historical event shifted, and for this next generation of the "post-witness era," as Diana Popescu and Tanja Schult call it, new perspectives and semantic spaces opened up.

Next is the view of the Holocaust being a non-representable and incomparable traumatic event which had long been the dominant position. The situation changed in light of theoretical debates that took place, among others, in the disciplines of history and literary and cultural studies since the 1960s. And when in the course of these discussions the notion of the possibility of a 'truthful representation of the event' began to be seriously questioned, the hitherto prevailing forms of representation, especially documentary and realistic modes,[4] began to wane, and here is the second cornerstone.

Long-term compliance to traditional guidelines of Holocaust representation eventually led to a rather staid predictability in artistic expression, that is, to a fatigue of form; meaning that the radical break in taboo freed or rescued this subject from solidification. After all, representing the Holocaust in comedic form in the 1990s was scandalous and the shock evoked in the recipient thus created a renewed interest in the event, an event that had been at risk of being fossilized behind the predictability of its representational forms.

The avant-garde tactics of intentional shock directed not only new attention to the Holocaust, but the deliberate confusion conjured up by the physical response of laughter[5] coupled with tears or a guilty conscience simultaneously forced a moment of remembrance. This strategy was successful because it could rely on a familiarity on the part of the audience with both the historical facts and the standardized forms of representation.[6] In other words, the well-known avant-garde tactics of provocation were successfully placed in the service of a new culture of remembrance.[7]

This artistic dynamic of the forbidden and transgression of the forbidden unfolded – and this is the third cornerstone – in a period after the end of the Cold War, that is, at a time in the 1990s in which geopolitical power relations were being redrawn and individual national narratives of the Holocaust were brought into an entirely new dialogue. In this phase, artistic media began to use transgressional practices to critically focus on the respective functionalization of the Holocaust in its different national historical-cultural versions. An example would be the numerous works of art that deal with the so-called "Americanization" of the Holocaust in the context of the United States.

Is There Glamour in Trauma?

The first Holocaust comedy in the American context is Melvin Jules Bukiet's *After*, published in 1996. Bukiet is the son of a Holocaust survivor and one of the most prominent representatives of the so-called '2Gs,' that is, the second generation of survivors, who, incidentally, have not been met without controversy in their literary attempts to give their generational perspective a voice. Ruth Franklin, for example, in her article "Identity Theft" had this to say about the literature of '2Gs' and the question whether there is glamour in trauma:

> [It is] one of the most disturbing trends in contemporary Jewish literature. Call it neo-Wilkomirski-ism: driven by ambition or envy or narcissism, a number of the children of survivors … have constructed elaborate literary fictions that serve to elevate their own childhood traumas above and even beyond the sufferings of their parents. … In American life, and in Jewish life too, there is glamour in trauma, and the children cannot resist stealing their parents' spotlight. … the most recent writings by the second generation show that Adorno may have been right after all. A certain kind of literature after Auschwitz is indeed barbaric. (31–32)

An entire branch of research, using terms such as post-memory, prosthetic memory or vicarious memory, now focuses on the extent to which trauma can be inherited, that is, how and to which degree the descendants of Holocaust survivors are equally traumatized, and whether and in which ways this set of 'second-hand' knowledge or Holocaust memories can be expressed in such texts.

After is written from this position – it can be seen in the context of the generational change just described. Via its intention to shock its readers, the novel employs various comedic strategies, including burlesque, satirical, tragicomic and absurdist modes while also negotiating the central problems of the 1990s: the novel criticizes the instrumentalization of the Holocaust, questions its mediation procedures and addresses the issue of how the Holocaust can be remembered. It examines the role of fiction and castigates those who profit from the Holocaust Industry, all the while asking: What does it mean to be Jewish?

The novel begins in the first hour of post-war history; that is, the first moment 'After' the SS henchmen have abandoned their posts in a concentration camp but before the American liberators enter it. The novel thus positions itself in the moment at which reorganizing post-war history and identifying Holocaust survivors begin. The novel is shocking in the radical nature of its orchestration, in which none of the characters are met with either mercy or grace: for example, the Jewish survivors of various concentration camps are represented primarily as business-minded and interested in nothing other than profit making. Immediately after their liberation, they strategize over various black market schemes, which make up the bulk of the story, and eventually hatch a plan to acquire the gold taken from the teeth of murdered Jews that was cast by the Nazis into a huge nugget and then stored on the grounds of a former concentration camp.

The American liberators, referred to in the novel as "the true master race," (7) are involved in the black market activities of the ex-prisoners and are generally either corrupt, or in the best cases, naïve; while the media are unscrupulous, sensationalist exploiters of the worldwide outcry over the shocking conditions revealed in the camps, and the Germans are envious of the benefits, that, in their opinion, the survivors are receiving from the Allied powers. In scenes of a bitter-burlesque quality, the players get into contact in the 'zero hour' right after the liberation of the concentration camp. In one of these, protagonist Isaac Kaufman, whose teeth were destroyed through acts of sadistic mistreatment by an SS-guard, is asked by war reporter Elizabeth Smith Moss, easily identifiable as modelled after the historical figure of Margaret Bourke-White, who had accompanied the American troops and had documented the liberation of Buchenwald, to pose under the gallows for a photo:

> "Could you stand there?"
>
> "Why?"
>
> "So I can take a picture."
>
> There was something about the pose that made Isaac break into a grin. As soon as she saw his winning expression, the journalist took a calf-leather billfold out of her pocket and handed him a dollar. Such a mouth was a real asset.
>
> … The situation grew even funnier when Elizabeth Smith Moss inquired, "What did you do here?"
>
> The answer was obvious. "We died." (10)

I read this book in a historical dialogue with two important works by historians that were published shortly after the novel: Peter Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life* (1999) and Norman Finkelstein's *The Holocaust-Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (2000). Both texts analyze the role that, according to the authors, the Holocaust has assumed in American culture around the turn of the millennium. Yet while Finkelstein mainly discusses the instrumentalization of the historical event and the suffering of the victims on the American scene, Novick concentrates on the role the Holocaust plays for Jewish American self-understanding, and he holds that the Shoah has come to function here as the main element.[8]

Sharing this view, one of the deep concerns of *After* is its critique of the fact that the Shoah has become the most important conferring element for the formation of Jewish-American identity. This is played out, for instance, in a drastic scene in which the former prisoners celebrate their first Passover festival since liberation. For each generation of Jews Passover entails a reflection upon their liberation experiences, and includes traditional rites such as enumerating the biblical plagues. Yet in this first post-Holocaust festival the ritual listing of the traditional plagues is replaced by the names of the concentration camps, thus signifying the extent to which the Holocaust serves as a central, constituent element in Jewish identity formation. In the end, the celebration gets completely out of control and mutates into a nightmarish orgy, where non-kosher food brought in by the liberators is devoured in large quantities only in turn to be regurgitated en masse by the starved and emaciated survivors. Allowing the Holocaust to become a central element of Jewish identity in place of long-established religious traditions, this scene would seem to argue, results in a toxic, corrosive force (cf. 33 ff.).

The center of the novel, though, is an absurd, late-postmodern scene in the vein of Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), in which all the figures celebrate a wild costume party on a ship which can be read as a type of Dance of Death. The ship – staged as a veritable heterotopic site – is not only a symbol of the emergence of immediate post-war societies and landscapes, it also represents the restructuring processes of the international political scene as the political roles and power relations were redistributed after the end of the Cold War in the late 1990s. At this party, everything is questioned: Jews are dressed up as Nazis, men as women, civilians as soldiers, and so on. Everything is renegotiated on this ship, even the fate of the survivors. While protagonist Isaac anticipates a life of endless trauma, only the orthodox Fishl, whose child is born on the ship and who emigrates with his family to Palestine, begins a new life (see 241 ff.).

All in all, trauma is staged in the form of automatized living, however, in the form of victims that function despite of it all. And so, I see in *After*, underneath all the burlesque madness, a deep-felt sorrow as the novel is designed to steer attention to the real thing: namely, the profound yet glossed over grieving of the victims.

A Howling Plea for Silence

In 2007, ten years after the publication of *After*, Tova Reich's *My Holocaus*t appeared. This satire, it seems to me, represents the next step in the evolution of this genre. Here, the rage builds to a 300-page howling crescendo that could hardly be outdone and which leaves the reader utterly exhausted. *After* feels almost tame compared with this novel, whose relentless tone of biting irony works itself into a rage that is both frantically furious and simultaneously ice-cold. *My Holocaust*'s primary focus of attack is the excess which the commercialization of Jewish suffering has reached. Bukiet also criticizes the instrumentalization and functionalization of the Holocaust, but Tova Reich rages against the elaborate, wholesale sellout of Jewish victims, while focusing her attack mainly on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, which opened in 1993.

The main characters of the novel are Maurice Messer and his son Norman, owner of the consulting firm "Holocaust Connections, Inc.," which makes its money by selling other companies the slogan "Make Your Cause a Holocaust" (15), a type of moral certificate or seal of approval indicating that company's level of Holocaust correctness. We are first introduced to Maurice and Norman on their flight home from Auschwitz, flying first class, because, as Norman tells us, "we already did cattle cars. From now on, it's first class all the way." (4). Maurice is the chairman of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.[9] He is a successful businessman who once worked in the lingerie trade, but then the Holocaust came into fashion. In fact, it was "more fashionable than even padded brassieres and lycra girdles" (15), and so Maurice switched to Holocaust marketing. A highly successful business decision, because, as the text tells us, "[t]he Holocaust was hot" (15). Maurice is a member of the "survivor-elite," that is, those that survived "with style" (17), and as such is also a brilliant self-marketer highly dedicated to, one, stylizing his dubious survivor narrative and, two, fundraising for the museum, both of which are deeply entangled and for which every possible means are used.

Norman is a fulltime member of the second generation of survivors, and going great lengths to portray him as an inflated dumbass, Reich takes the '2Gs' severely to task as "Holocaust hangers-on" and "honorary survivors" (10), as crybabies who wail to one another about their traumatic "Holocaust-envy" (11) at "regularly scheduled 2-G Anonymous support group meetings in synagogue basements." That is, as having "[a]ll the benefits of Auschwitz without having to actually live through the nastiness – Holocaust lite" (10). The black sheep of the Messer family is Norman's daughter Nechama, former "Holocaust princess" and top dog of the "Holocaust hierarchy" (21), who, as Sister Consolatia, now lives in a Carmelite convent near the Auschwitz concentration camp. Nechama represents the third generation and was once obsessed with the Holocaust but then came to the view that "'Christians have a right to a Holocaust too,' which her father vehemently disputes: 'They're trying to

hijack the Holocaust,' Norman wailed. 'Christians are not – I repeat, not! – acceptable Holocaust material.'" (23).

All the figures are portrayed as either lacking in moral fiber or as utterly ridiculous; a strategy which is inexorably established from the outset and uncompromisingly carried through to the end. The text's humor and wit are used exclusively in the service of an unremitting attack, as Reich lays bare the extent to which the "Holocaust-business" (8) now resembles an elaborate and professionally structured company where everyone, in their own self-interest, wants to secure their share of the profit, a profit largely sustained by the clever (self-)marketing of the suffering of the victims of the Holocaust and whose central headquarters is the Holocaust Memorial in Washington. American culture, the novel argues, has dedicated itself to commemorating the Holocaust while at the same time rendering this task impossible through the excesses of functionalizing and marketing the event.

The ideal environment for such a business culture, the book tells us, is an American landscape whose official policies of political correctness, identity politics and equal opportunity lead to a universalization and dilution of the true dimension of the historic event. This is clearly illustrated in the climax of the novel when the "United Holocausts rainbow coalition of all Holocausts, personal or global" (243) violently occupy the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to demand the right to a private Holocaust. And all groups are duly represented, from "chicken holocaust" (287) to "Confederate flag holocaust" (287) to "Gynecological and Menstrual Holocaust" (310).

At the end of the novel the tone shifts as a strange, disembodied voice is heard, perhaps from Sister Consolatia, that prays:

> Don't let me get used to it, Lord; that's all I ask. Let it always hurt just as much, it is the desire of my body and my blood. Keep me forever suspended in thin air, in complete consciousness and pure terror … I float through this ruin of a museum to illuminate the images and icons by the light of a memorial candle. (320–321)

And in my reading it is here that the deep concern of the novel is made manifest: it is a plea to recognize the uniqueness of the historic event, and to acknowledge the need for a silent respect for the agony of the victims. If trauma was represented in *After*'s madness in the form of the frantic yet paralyzed characters, *My Holocaust* argues for accepting the failure of language to represent traumatic experience. Because for all its furious crying, *My Holocaust* wants only one thing: silence.

The Next Generation

Following the verbal onslaught of *My Holocaust*, camp comedy begins to undergo a transformation with Shalom Auslander's *Hope: A Tragedy* from 2012 into what

was designated the "post-witness era" (cf. Popescu and Schult). With Auslander we have a young generation of Jewish-American writers at the helm, who are interested in dealing with the Holocaust from their generational position: without any direct reference, but with all the knowledge that "media memory" provides. And in Auslander's case, with an ultra-orthodox religious background he has since parted ways with. While *After* can be characterized as a burlesque and *My Holocaust* as a satire, *Hope* must be understood as a tragicomedy. In a tone that differs markedly from that of the previous texts, *Hope* is continuously engaged with the questions of how the Holocaust should be remembered, what role it should play in Jewish identity and the role of faith in this remembrance process.

And here there is an interesting development: Both Bukiet and Reich see religion as the solution. In Bukiet's novel only the figure of the Orthodox Fishl succeeds in creating a new beginning by emigrating to Palestine. And Reich's rage is finally quelled upon hearing the befitting attitude of the nun's prayer. Auslander's novel, however, doesn't continue in this direction in spite of the fact that its structure is reminiscent of the story of Job and the text as a whole comes across as a very learned and at the same time very funny religious meditation. For Auslander, though, the solution is not in the love of God, but in the love of self, as I will show below.

The story's protagonist is Solomon Kugel who spends his days thinking about last words, his own and those of others. Again and again, the text is written in onomatopoeic language, which serves as an important source for the novel's comic friction, and so the first versions of the last words Kugel contemplates, are, for example, "*oof*", "*splat*" or "*ka-blammo*" (5; italics in original), words which follow daydreams about whether it is better to be in the top or bottom layer of a mass grave. With these daydreams Kugel attempts to repress his more immediate problems, mostly consisting of his mother, who lives with him and who suffers from massive Holocaust envy.

Although her family has been living in the US for generations, she is obsessed with the Holocaust and not only has she adopted the behaviors of traumatized survivors, she has accordingly rewritten her life story, a poignant example of which includes revamping photo albums with press images of the Holocaust "until these terrifying images of history's tragic victims equaled, and soon outnumbered, the photographs of actual Kugels" (128). She terrorizes her son with stories such as that the lampshade on his desk was made from the skin of his grandfather. It goes without saying that both mother and son are portrayed as difficult, distraught and neurotic characters.[10]

What all three novels have in common is their desire to investigate the effects of the Holocaust as the central element of Jewish-American identity. In the formulation of the historian Peter Novick, "The Holocaust as virtually the only common denominator of American Jewish identity in the late twentieth century, has filled a need for a consensual symbol" (7), and all three novels would argue that the price for achieving this commonality is very high indeed. It means the end of a Jewish self-understanding on the basis of religious and cultural traditions. In Bukiet's orgy

scene, the corrosive effect of this situation is delineated; in Reich's novel, it is the dangerous results of selling out one's own values that are shown, and in Auslander's approach, it is the unmanageable burden of the traumatic historical heritage and the consequent loss of future prospects that is negotiated.

For Kugel, there is no escape from history, represented symbolically by the fact that he finds an old woman in the attic of his new house, living there for decades in secret and credibly claiming to be Anne Frank. Kugel had expressly purchased this new house in order to start over with his family during difficult times, but with such a legacy it is made apparent that a fresh start is impossible. Kugel does not manage to get rid of the unwanted guest, and thus the novel's central concern is raised: What then can or should be done with the burden of a historical heritage, an inherited trauma that threatens to destroy lives?

The novel negotiates this important issue via the iconic figure of Anne Frank whose diary statement, "In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart," has become the paradigmatic statement of hope and faith in the US.[11] Are faith and hope, then, the solution, as Bukiet's and Reich's novels seem to imply? Auslander's text, in the end, draws a different conclusion, which its contradictive title, *Hope: A Tragedy*, tries to makes clear: simply hoping for a happy life doesn't necessarily lead to a happy life. Thus, the novel plays on an astonishing thesis voiced by Kugel's bizarre psychoanalyst Professor Jove – that hope and optimism are the largest source of human suffering. Hitler, Jove argues, is the best example:

> Hitler was the most unabashed doe-eyed optimist of the last hundred years. … Full of hope, the Führer was. A dreamer! … If I just kill this one, gas that one, everything will be okay. … The only thing more naively hopeful than the Final Solution is the ludicrous dictum to which it gave birth: Never Again. (39–40)

After hope has been so thoroughly discredited, it is love that remains and it is love that the novel ultimately endorses. In one scene Kugel asks Anne Frank if she understands why he will tolerate her in his house and not call the police, to which she says: "Because you're German, … and you feel guilty for committing atrocities." Wrong, Kugel informs her. So she tries again: "Because you're Jewish, … and you feel guilty for *not* suffering atrocities." (64; italics in original).

The history of the Holocaust, it is argued in this scene, unfolds its destructive power most effectively on the basis of guilt. Guilt in turn leads to self-hatred, and people plagued with self-hatred have provided her with the best shelter: "The best kind. I prefer the self-hating. Self-hating Germans, self-hating Jews, self-hating French, self-hating Americans." (65). What is expressed here is that the integration of the history of the Holocaust within the life of a cultural group or an individual on the basis of guilt and self-hatred leads to destruction. It follows that the historical legacy of the Holocaust can only be effective as a productive element in Jewish self-

conception if this integration does not take place in the form of a sacrificial narrative that leads to self-hatred, but from the perspective of self-esteem and self-love.

As the Bible describes, self-love and love of God are closely connected and it is here that the question of faith comes into play. While this novel doesn't turn to institutionalized religion, the inclusion of a structure based on the story of Job lends the text a religious dimension. Job, like Kugel, is confronted with a series of disasters, but while Job's life ends well due to his adherence to the love of God, the less religious Kugel doesn't manage to love himself: his life is destroyed when his house goes up in flames. Anne Frank, however, survives, of course, and makes her way to the next attic. And with this final move, the text shifts the trauma of the Holocaust to yet the next generation, to those who are doomed to inherit it due to their lack of self-love so that the Holocaust is invited to fill the void.

How to Proceed?

So what then is new with this genre? The general move in the 1990s towards combining the genre of comedy and the topic of the Holocaust was certainly a new – even shockingly so – development. Bukiet's novel is a prime example of this first step. But as with all avant-garde strategies, they quickly become predictable. We thus now see this form at a crossroads in the new millennium – and may ask ourselves how to proceed. While Reich's text follows the pathway of comedic outrage, Auslander keeps the comedic approach, but turns to a profound meditation on affective conditions: hope, guilt and love.

Yet there is more to it. I argue that what we also see in these newer texts are traces of the affective turn in critical theory. That is, while Bukiet's novel is firmly rooted in trauma discourses of the 1990s, Reich and Auslander both reflect on concepts developed in affect theory in the new millennium. I read the previously cited quotation from Reich's novel

> Don't let me get used to it, Lord; that's all I ask. Let it always hurt just as much, it is the desire of my body and my blood. Keep me forever suspended in thin air, in complete consciousness and pure terror … I float through this ruin of a museum to illuminate the images and icons by the light of a memorial candle. (320–321)

as a prototypical example of affect theory's conceptualization of the body's paradoxical encounters with the world, of its in-betweenness in being affected and affecting at the same time. Finally, to Auslander's disqualification of hope in his novel and his endorsing of love as the solution, Lauren Berlant, self-proclaimed "love theorist," would most likely respond: "spreading pleasure might open up a wedge into an alternative ethics of living, or not." (105).

Notes

1 A different version of this text was published in German as Susanne Rohr, "'Holocaust Lite?': Literarische Entwicklungen der amerikanischen Holocaust-Komödie" in: Heindl, Nina and Véronique Sina, eds. *Notwendige Unzulänglichkeit. Künstlerische und mediale Repräsentationen des Holocaust*, Münster: LIT Verlag, 2017: 143–160.

2 For a more detailed discussion of these difficult questions cf. also Rohr 2014.

3 Concerning the situation in Israel, Eyal Zandberg presents an informative overview in his essay "Ketchup Is the Auschwitz of Tomatoes."

4 Terrence Des Pres even speaks of a "Holocaust etiquette" that defined how the Holocaust should be represented in works of fiction, and that had been well in place up until the 1980s. He describes the rules, in the form of the commandments, as follows: "1. The Holocaust shall be represented, in its totality, as a unique event, as a special case and kingdom of its own, above or below or apart from history. 2. Representations of the Holocaust shall be as accurate and faithful as possible to the facts and conditions of the event, without change or manipulation for any reason – artistic reasons included. 3. The Holocaust shall be approached as a solemn or even a sacred event, with a seriousness admitting no response that might obscure its enormity or dishonor its dead." (217).

5 Caroline Picart calls provocations like this "bisociation," the result of a "sudden clash between two mutually exclusive codes of rules, or associative contexts, which are suddenly juxtaposed" (202). Matthew Boswell describes scandalous art like this as "the willingness to speak the unspeakable" (4), and for Hagai Dagan, it is an expression of "Holocaust-nostalgia" (155).

6 For artistic experiments such as these the right timing is key. Jean-Michel Frodon shows how, for example, Jerry Lewis's notorious film comedy *The Day the Clown Cried* which Lewis produced in 1972 and which Frodon calls a "weird and disturbing combination of tones" (57) never saw the light of day because at that time the necessary cultural context didn't yet exist.

7 Andrew S. Gross and Susanne Rohr explore this function in more detail in *Comedy – Avant-Garde – Scandal: Remembering the Holocaust after the End of History*.

8 Roberta Rosenberg quotes the following results from a poll taken in 2013 that seem to support Novick's view: Responding to the question "What does being Jewish mean in America today?" 73% of the persons interviewed agreed to "Remembering the Holocaust," while 19% of the respondents agreed to "Observing Jewish law." (113).

9 Some critics have read the novel as roman à clef, as Reich's taking revenge on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Reich's husband Walter Reich served as its director from 1994–1998 and had to resign after a scandal. Also, some of the events depicted obviously refer to historical occurrences (cf. Sanders).

10 As in Reich's novel, surviving the Holocaust in Auslander's *Hope* is used as the ultimate touchstone of fitness for life. Just as Maurice and Blanche Messer "knew in their hearts" that "[i]f the war broke out tomorrow, … their Norman would never make it" (Reich 16), so Anne Frank tells Solomon Kugel "You wouldn't have lasted five minutes in Auschwitz!" (Auslander 177).

11 Many texts from the realm of Jewish American fiction satirize this statement and its underlying optimism. In Nathan Englander's short story "What We Talk About When

We Talk About Anne Frank," for instance, two couples play the "Anne Frank-game" that consists of trying to figure out who in the case of a life-threatening situation would be willing to run the risk of hiding someone in their attic, and so does Solomon Kugel in *Hope*. Roberta Rosenberg writes the following concerning the iconic figure of Anne Frank: "Satirizing iconic Holocaust figures as well as deconstructing major Holocaust questions are just two ways that Nathan Englander, Shalom Auslander, and filmmakers Jerry Seinfeld and Larry David begin to undercut the dominance of Holocaust identity on the American Jewish communal psyche." (121).

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Part V
Migrancy, Indigeneity and Trauma

Tales from Firozsha Baag
The Trauma of an Immigrant

David Staines

In all the many essays and books I have read and I have been reading, there is never any mention of the trauma or traumatic situation of the immigrant. Yet the immigrant or, even more for its particular relevance now in Germany, the categorical subheading of the refugee should have a rightful place in any discussion of trauma, for the psychological trauma of being an immigrant, cut off from one's homeland and coming to grips, however reluctantly, with one's new landscape, is a period of stress, anxiety, prolonged meditation, and perhaps no release from one's own memories. However stressful this situation may be, it replays itself again and again in one's mind; each time the person reorients the psyche to face the traumatic situation, that person – on each occasion! – seeks to understand a predicament which, finally, perhaps, cannot be understood.

A Canadian fiction author who was born in Bombay in 1951 and moved to Canada in 1975, Rohinton Mistry has written three novels, *Such a Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1995), and *Family Matters* (2002), each of them becoming Man Booker finalists. Yet his first and only collection of short fiction, *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (1987), presents a kaleidoscope of pained and painful decisions which must be reached by some immigrants intent on choosing exile. These decisions, wrought with much stress, are not accompanied by acceptance or relief; rather, they place at least one immigrant, Kersi Boyce, in an unimaginable state of total paralysis, fearful of going backwards and equally fearful of moving forwards, trapped in a no-man's-land and powerless to effect any sort of personal change, sick of his homeland and simultaneously sick for his homeland. He is, rightly speaking, a traumatized individual who cannot sustain his situation. Only at the end, in the last of eleven short stories, does Kersi find a way of dealing with his trauma, a movement into the realm of writing, which proves a potentially effective way of figuring out his personal trauma while he still continues in it. Trauma, reports Ruth Leys,

> was originally the term for a surgical wound, conceived on the model of a rupture of the skin or protective envelope of the body resulting in a catastrophic global reaction in the entire organism … for so long has the notion of a shock with a physical 'break in' and that of danger to life been the model for an allegedly psychical symptom that to this day psychical trauma is still bound to the concept of surgical shock. (19)

Trauma is often seen through the lens of the German holocaust, the suffering individuals, be they the dead or the survivors, being analyzed by supposedly knowing individuals. Trauma also effects, among many, childhood abuse survivors; it wreaks havoc with AIDS sufferers; it has given rise, too, to shell-shock, now called post-traumatic stress disorder, a term now freely applied to the military who suffer exposure to all manner of shocks and cannot return to a normal life-style.

Trauma is often the consequence of overwhelming, indeed self-defeating stress which exceeds the individual's ability to integrate into himself or herself the emotions involved with this degree of stress. And so these individuals, be they young or old, structure their lives around repetitive patterns of reliving traumatic memories, traumatic reminders of their pasts, traumatizing their lives into the pattern of non-living existences.

Tales from Firozsha Baag is Rohinton Mistry's account of the psychological trauma of being an immigrant. It is not an autobiographical work. "We have Kersi the narrator whose development we witness from childhood to teenager to young man in Canada," Mistry comments. "Many people see that story as autobiographical. The parents in that story say the book was very promising to read, but they would like to learn more about how he lives in Canada. People who should know better see this as the author writing a book for his parents. But it's the narrator of the fiction who's speaking, not me." (Hancock 144)

Tales from Firozsha Baag is an objective study of Kersi Boyce and his childhood friends as Kersi takes up his position as an immigrant, powerless in his new Canadian world and powerless, too, in his old Indian world. From each of his friends, he learns something, and yet at the end of the stories he has not reached a solution to his traumatized and traumatizing experience. The trauma he experiences is the trauma of the immigrant, for he has learned in the earliest stories that he is destined to emigrate to Canada, and each story reveals why he wants to leave his homeland and why he never leaves his homeland.

Tales from Firozsha Baag contains ten stories, with the eleventh and final story, "Swimming Lessons," serving as the coda to the other ten. Each of the ten takes place in an apartment building: "I realized the characters could know each other and appear in each other's stories … the book is more than the sum of the stories because of the apartment building idea." (Hancock 146). The building is a complex, "one of the thousand of architecturally bland, seemingly soulless concrete blocks that house the middle classes of Bombay … . As readers, we are given access to the lives of those who live in Firozsha Baag, family by family, story by story, one resonant incident after another, until we begin to see how they connect and overlap." (New. "Afterword" 264) And each tale proves to Kersi that this chaotic world of Firozsha Baag is a world from which he wants to escape, though escape proves transitory, futile, wellnigh impossible.

"One Sunday," the first composed of the ten tales though not the opening story[1], which won the Hart House competition chaired by Dorothy Livesay, is the terrifying story of Najamai and her local boy Francis, who ends up stealing from her. When Kersi along with his older brother Percy set out to bring back Francis from Tar Gully, the home of the dispossessed, he "was horrified. This was not the way he had wanted it to end when he'd emerged with his [cricket] bat. He watched in terror as Francis was slapped and kicked, had his arms twisted and his hair pulled, and was abused and spat upon. He looked away when their eyes met." (43) From this first story, then, Kersi would flee the site of this random mob violence.

Kersi's care for his cricket bat mirrors the nurturing of his childhood innocence; contrarily, the bat's deterioration becomes symbolic of the loss of this innocence as he is confronted with the tribulations of sexuality and proves to be an imperative in chronicling Kersi's transition to adolescence. The cricket bat holds a special significance as part of his youth. The sport, constituting a childhood dream, was an event that fostered quality time with both his father and his friends. As a tangible relic of these times past, the bat represents a time of innocence. When Kersi cannot wipe the bat clean after it kills a rat, it is a metaphor for his declining innocence. In this first story, then, Kersi, caught between youth and adolescence, must leave behind his youthful ways; he cannot go back to his childhood innocence.

> He sat on the bed and picked up his bat. He ripped off the rubber grip and slowly, meditatively, started to tear the freshly glued cord from around the handle, bit by bit, circle by circle. Soon, the cord lay on the floor in a black tangled heap, and the handle looked bald, exposed, defenceless. Never before had Kersi seen his cricket bat in this flayed and naked state. He stood up, grasped the handle with both hands, rested the blade at an angle to the floor, then smashed his foot down upon it. There was a loud crack as the handle snapped. (45)

Kersi separates himself from his childhood innocence by snapping the cricket bat in two, breaking off the handle. The separation of the handle is a clear indication that he will never be able to hold his bat in the same way again. The hold he has on his childhood is irretrievably lost.

The second composed story, "Lend Me Your Light," focuses on a strange trio, Kersi, Percy, and Percy's schoolmate Jamshed, who is leaving Bombay for the lights of New York City. Kersi is becoming aware of the privations at home. "There just weren't any prospects in this country; nothing could stop its downhill race towards despair and ruin." (184) His parents endorse his desire to leave India for the promised land of Canada, more specifically Toronto, where

> [t]here is a lot of opportunity … . In the clichés of our speech was reflected the cliché which the idea of emigration had turned into for so many. According to my parents, I would have no difficulty being approved, what with my education, and my westernized

> background, and my fluency in the English language./And they were right. A few months later things were ready for my departure to Toronto. (185)

On his last night in Bombay, Kersi realizes he is "someone out of a Greek tragedy, guilty of the sin of hubris for seeking emigration out of the land of my birth, and paying the price in burnt-out eyes: I, Tiresias, blind and throbbing between two lives, the one in Bombay and the one to come in Toronto." (186) He sees himself as he will be seen, an immigrant throbbing between two lives, partaking of neither one nor the other, blind from his position as an immigrant, trapped in a combat between these two dimensions of his existence, the home he left and the home he has to accept, both homes denying him any sense of home.

When Kersi returns to Bombay for a visit after one year in Toronto, he is still far from settled; he returns to Bombay completely unsettled. "I discovered I'd brought back with me my entire burden of riddles and puzzles, unsolved. The whole sorry package was there, not lightened at all. The epiphany would have to wait for another time, another trip." (201) Once again he invokes the same Greek tragedy: "I mused, I gave way to whimsy: I Tiresias, throbbing between two lives, humbled by the ambiguities and dichotomies confronting me" (201). Kersi is paralyzed by his immigrant position, paralysis being a deadening state which inflicts its sufferers with indecision, stress, and anxiety.

The allusion to Tiresias, the blind seer of Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, is an allusion not to Sophocles but to T.S. Eliot. *The Waste Land* has Tiresais say, "I, Tiresias, though blind throbbing between two lives." Mistry's Kersi is paralyzed by "the ambiguities and dichotomies" confronting himself, "sentenced to wander in search of a home." His failure is "a failure to evaluate a situation in Canada as someone who is essentially homeless" (Genetsch 128). Again and again he is traumatized by his homeless situation as an immigrant.

In this same story, Kersi begins to compare his own plight as an immigrant with the plights of other people. Jamshed, his brother Percy's one-time friend, is the first of these portraits. A "crassly materialistic boor" (202) who lives an existence completely on the surface, he hates his world of Bombay and loves the materialistic, indeed hedonistic delights of capitalist New York City, his desired residence; with "his adamant refusal to enjoy his trips to India, his way of seeing the worst in everything" (201), he provides Kersi with absolutely no perspective on what Kersi could be as an engaged immigrant. At the end, he receives a Christmas card from Jamshed. "I put it down without opening it, wondering if this innocuous outer shell concealed more of his confusion, disdain, arrogance./Later, I walked out of the apartment and down the hallway, and dropped the envelope down the chute of the garbage incinerator." (201–202) This second story ends the same way the first story ended; in the first he destroyed the cricket bat; in the second the unopened Christmas card is thrown "down the chute of the garbage incinerator."

The next two stories Mistry wrote were "Auspicious Occasion" and "Condolence Visit," two tales from the Firozsha Baag complex but unrelated to Kersi Boyce and his brother Percy. Although he then wrote "The Collectors" without mentioning the Boyce brothers, it was during its composition that he came upon the idea that his stories might belong together as *Tales from Firozsha Baag;* his later story, "Exercisers," continues and concludes this particular story. He wrote "The Ghost of Firozsha Baag" next, again without reference to the Boyces. In his subsequent stories, however, Kersi Boyce comes to play a dominant role, and the focus falls more and more on his position as an immigrant.

"Of White Hairs and Cricket," his subsequent story, watches fourteen-year-old Kersi Boyce, again in first-person narration, as he removes the white hairs from his father's scalp each Sunday morning while his mother, a new central figure in his upbringing, watches and bickers with her husband; his brother Percy "was always excused from this task. And if I pointed it out, the answer was: your brother's college studies are more important." (113) Even here is the impending plight confronting the adolescent. "And one day, you must go, too, to America," his father tells him. "Somehow we'll get the money to send you. I'll find a way." (119) This story reveals Kersi's slow withdrawal from his life in Bombay, wrapped, as it is, in nostalgia for the childhood activities he must leave behind. "I threw myself on the bed. I felt like crying, and buried my face on the pillow," he notes at the end. "I wanted to weep for myself, for not being able to hug Daddy when I wanted to, and for not ever saying thank you for cricket in the morning, and pigeons and bicycles and dreams; and for all the white hairs that I was powerless to stop." (128)

In the next story, "Squatter," Kersi "did talk a lot about America and Canada. Kersi had started writing to universities there since his final high-school year, and had also sent letters of inquiry to the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi and to the U.S. Consulate at Breach Candy. But so far he had not made any progress." (159) And this story contains another example of an immigrant, Sarosh-Sid, who leaves Bombay for Toronto but could not adapt to Canadian ways even after living there for ten years. With his new name as Sid, he reveals his initial desire to forsake his Indian identity and to be reborn as a Canadian. He seeks assimilation in his new home, not an identity which would embrace what he was and what he would be, and he comes to believe that "life in the land of milk and honey was just a pain in the posterior" (178). While Kersi was "joking and wondering what to make of it all" (178), Sarosh-Sid stands as a poignant and pitiable example of the personal failure of the immigrant. At the party on his permanent return to India, Sarosh-Sid "smiled and nodded his way through it all, passing around Canadian currency at the insistence of some of the curious ones who, egged on by his mother, also pestered him to display his Canadian passport and citizenship card" (176). He is a further warning to the young Kersi of the inherent dangers awaiting the would-be immigrant.

"The Paying Guests" introduces yet another immigrant, this one as callous as Jamshed, yet he never returns to Bombay; only his parents come back to India, homeless.

> The couple, after a long and arduous life of working and scrimping and saving, had managed to educate and send their only son to Canada. Some years later he sponsored them. So they got rid of their flat and went, only to find he was not the son they once knew; after a period of misery and ill-treatment at his hands they returned to Bombay, homeless and heartbroken. (137)

Then comes the final story, "Swimming Lessons," a surprise ending, which is not another story in the sequence, but a wrap-up of the entire sequence. Kersi, now residing in an apartment complex in Don Mills, Ontario,

> undergoes a transformation from an immigrant obsessed with the past and the culture left behind to someone who makes a conscious effort to come to terms with the social reality of Canada. Shedding older notions of culture, identity and difference, he becomes able to give up the distance he has hitherto maintained towards Canadian society. (Genetsch 129)

But does he give up the distance? Kersi sends home to his parents these ten preceding stories, each one of them an indictment of his Bombay home, and yet painting portraits of people who have been immigrants. There was, first of all, Jamshed, leaving for the materialistic intensity of New York; there was Sarosh-Sid, who returned permanently and in failure to Bombay ten years later; there was even the unnamed immigrant of "The Paying Guests," who became another person once he arrived in his new home of Canada. And then there is Kersi, dwelling in a Canadian apartment complex so similar to the now fabled Firozsha Baag apartment complex. He sends all his stories home, and yet he is still the same immigrant, unsure of where he is, uncertain of his future and his past, in other words "homeless and heartbroken" without any sense of where he could be. He was, he confided as early as "Lend Me Your Light," "guilty of the sin of hubris for seeking emigration out of the land of my birth." And in this same story he already knew – from the very beginning! – that he was destined for emigration. But once emigration becomes a fact of his life, the world of the immigrant closes in on him, leaving him paralyzed and homeless.

By becoming a beginning writer, by seeking to transform the people of Bombay into the figures of his fiction, Kersi is signalizing that the words and worlds of fiction do not make the horrors of his life disappear; they do, however, offer him a mode of rendering his former world a permanent fixture of his past while the past still continues to haunt and destabilize him. As Mistry once remarked:

> I think I wanted to write about the life I had left behind. I had read something in a book by Camus – I forget which one it was – something about how one can redeem oneself –

> one's life – through writing, and that intrigued me and I wanted to see if it would really work. Could I redeem my life? I wasn't sure really what I wanted to do, what I wanted to redeem, and how it would work, but at the back of my mind, there was this feeling that writing would make everything all right, make everything worthwhile. (Wilson 2)

In "Swimming Lessons," Kersi does not seek to make everything worthwhile; he seeks only to record for himself what have become his memories of his Bombay world. By putting this world into his own writing, he is attempting to organize his insecurities and pains, all those that are his and those around him, into a sequential narrative which gives them some kind of shape. And through this shape he can begin to work through the trauma that is his predicament. "If the wound of trauma remains open, its pain may be worked through in the process of its being 'translated' into art." (Kaplan 19)

The two readers of all his stories are his parents, who want to know more about his life in Canada and yet are perplexed that his stories may be a sign of homesickness. His mother says, "he must be so unhappy there, all his stories are about Bombay, he remembers every little thing about his childhood, he is thinking about it all the time even though he is ten thousand miles away, my poor son, I think he misses his home and us and everything he left behind" (252). "My hope is, Father said, that there will be some story based on his Canadian experience, that way we will know something about our son's life there." (256). What they do not realize is that his longing for home parallels his longing for *a* home. He is trying to figure out through his own writing what home should be. He is the immigrant who has to resolve his own fate, and that fate is yet to be decided. He can never return to a world that is no more.

Homelessness may well be the plight of the immigrant, which is a root cause of his or her personal trauma. For some, like Jamshed, their dislike of their home becomes absorption into New York. For others, like Kersi, their dislike of their home becomes homelessness. "A true home – a place of one's own – is an extension of the individuals who live in it, a part of themselves. It is the outer envelope of personhood," Kai Erikson points out. But, he continues,

> to be homeless is to live on the outer edges of the human circle, if not to be excluded from it altogether – to be of another kind, maybe even of another species. The homeless feel left out, understandably, and we, in our turn, find it hard not to distance ourselves from them by distinguishing their kind of being from ours. (159)

And Martin Genetsch argues that

> [Kersi's] ties to India, although still intact, are no longer characterized by an active engagement with the country of his origins. It is only memories that connect him to the past. Kersi, who has not adapted to Canada yet, is not fully part of India anymore either.

> He is in-between cultures, i. e. he does not fully belong to either the new or the old world. (133)

In his Don Mills apartment complex, so similar to the Firozsha Baag complex of all his earlier stories, he is alone, not knowing his neighbours by their names, unlike his neighbours in Firozsha Baag; he regards them only as "the old man," "the old man's son," or "the Portuguese woman." In his apartment he is completely alone; he is completely *homeless*. He can relive all his memories; he can retain all his former friends; he cannot move on, and he cannot move back.

In "Lend Me Your Light," Kersi already knows his fate. "In a week," he says, "I would be flying out of Bombay, confused and miserable. I could feel it already." (197) For the immigrant this personal trauma comes to haunt the individual, leaving him or her to pick up the pieces, to remember one's former home, and, perhaps, to find some delight in one's present home. For some like Jamshed, the former home is distasteful; the adopted home is perfect. For others like Kersi, the former home is the place you flee from; the adopted home is far from perfect; the final home is one you *cannot* find.

"Confused and miserable" is all too often the trauma of immigrants as they try to resolve the personal trauma of their endless predicaments. When Kersi Boyce sets up his home in Don Mills, Ontario, he realizes that he is "throbbing between two lives." He is now without a home, trying to make a space for himself wherever that space may be. In the end, he forges his new world in the field of fiction, making permanent his memories of the past and hoping that these will furnish him with a positive force in his own future. For the time being, however, he is trapped, "confused and miserable," alone and homeless.

Note

1 The stories were written in the following order: "One Sunday," "Lend Me Your Light," "Auspicious Occasion," "Condolence Visit," "The Collectors," "The Ghost of Firozsha Baag," "Of White Hairs and Crickets," "Squatter," "The Paying Guests," "Exercisers," and "Swimming Lessons." It was during Mistry's composing of "The Collectors" that he conceived of uniting the stories into a collection.

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Unwriting Trauma, Unwriting Asia
Post-Ethnic Identity in Madeleine Thien's *Certainty*

Ralf Hertel

In the context of trauma, and the literary negotiation of trauma, Madeleine Thien's recent novel *Certainty* (2006) is interesting for several reasons. Thien herself states that she wrote this book in a moment of crisis; her mother had just died, and the author understands her novel as a form of therapy to cope with this traumatic event (see Feldvoß). Certainly, trauma looms large in this work, and one is confronted with several instances of trauma here. However, there is something else to it, and Thien's novel is not just an instance of writing about trauma as a form of authorial self-help. The way trauma is addressed is interesting, and unexpected: trauma is not analysed here. Thien does not follow an analytic, or even psycho-analytic approach, an approach in which one might talk, or write, oneself into the heart of trauma. Apparently, she does not subscribe to the idea that one might overcome trauma by verbalising it. Rather, her novel demonstrates a certain unwillingness to debate trauma, and Thien seems to advocate a rather unorthodox approach. Trauma, *Certainty* seems to suggest, is overcome not by discussing it; as if the obsessive, reiterated analysis of a traumatic experience might actually only create a trauma in the first place. Instead, the novel follows a strategy of deflating trauma, as I will argue. The book is interesting for a further reason. Thien is a Canadian writer of Asian background – she is of Malaysian-Chinese ancestry –, and at least some of the traumata are rooted in specifically Asian experiences. I believe that in *Certainty*, there is a connection between trauma and Asia, and changing the representation of trauma here goes hand in glove with a change in the representation of Asianness. The move beyond trauma reflects a move beyond more traditional Asian-Canadian literature, or more generally, ethnic literature, I would hold. It is this connection between the unwriting of trauma and the unwriting of Asian identity that I want to focus on in the following.

Made up of loosely connected stories seen through the eyes of the various protagonists, *Certainty* is a Russian doll, or perhaps more appropriately, a Chinese box narrative. The novel opens in the recent 21st century with the Canadian Ansel, a physician who has still not recovered from the shock of the premature death of his partner, Gail, from pneumonia. The text then focuses on Gail herself, before her death. She is a radio journalist, and she is on two missions. One quest is journalistic: she has come across an encoded diary written by a Canadian soldier stationed in Hong Kong during World War II, one William Sullivan, and she wants to unlock its

secrets. The second mission is of a more personal nature and consists of her attempts to unlock the past of her father, who grew up in British North Borneo (today Malaysia), is tormented by his childhood but refuses to speak about it. Next, the narration turns to Gail's father Matthew himself, to his childhood in Asia, to the Japanese occupation and to the source of his trauma: as a child he had witnessed his father's execution at the hands of the Japanese. The focus then shifts to Matthew's first love, Ani, whom he had left behind in Borneo in the 1950s when he went to study in Australia before emigrating to Canada. The novel describes Ani meeting a Dutch war photographer, Sipke, marrying him and moving to the Netherlands. The circle finally closes when the focus shifts back to Gail, shortly before her death. We learn of her trip to the Netherlands to find help in deciphering Sullivan's diary. We see her visiting Sipke, and we see her looking at Sipke's photographs of his recently deceased wife Ani – the woman who was Gail's father's first love. It is here that Gail's two quests – decoding the diary and unlocking her father's secret past – finally merge.

If the book's Chinese box structure might seem complicated, it is obvious that the plot is replete with trauma: there is the unexpected death of Gail in her thirties and the question of how those close to her deal with it; there is the traumatic childhood experience of Gail's father Matthew, witnessing the execution of his own father; there is Gail's mother Clara who as a child watched a boy falling to his death from the roof of a building; there is Ani, who has to cope with being left behind in Borneo by her lover; and then there is the diary by the Canadian prisoner-of-war in Hong Kong. If trauma is central to the plot, so is Asia. Both quests at the heart of the novel – Gail wanting to decipher the war diary and attempting to get to the origins of her father's trauma – are rooted in Asia. Matthew's childhood trauma in British North Borneo in one way or other shapes the cause of all the other events: his leaving Ani behind; his emigration to Canada; Gail's life in Canada; and Ani's marrying Sipke after being abandoned by Matthew. If the first quest evinces a movement away from Asia, towards Canada, the second quest, circling around the war diary, leads us back from Canada to Asia. I believe that the close interrelation of trauma and Asia here is no coincidence but that there exists a functional connection between the representation of trauma and the representation of Asia in *Certainty*. Here however, trauma and Asia do not link in the obvious, expected ways, and unlike the fiction by other prominent Asian-Canadian authors such as Wayson Choy (*The Jade Peony*, 1995) or Joy Kogawa (*Obasan*, 1981), the novel does not discuss specifically Asian traumata, such as the fate of the Chinese immigrants working on the Canadian Pacific Railway or the deportation of the Japanese during World War II. Instead, Thien's novel aims at subtly redefining Asianness itself, and its strategies of doing so become apparent when we look at how the novel depicts trauma. There is, I would maintain, an illuminating parallel between Thien's attempt to unwrite trauma and to unwrite Asianness.

Unwriting Asia

Thien's wish to challenge more traditional representations of Asia is rather obvious. At first sight, references to Asia are pervasive, and begin even with the Asian setting of the cover design of the novel: the English paperback version by Faber & Faber of 2006 shows two Asian children cycling through an apparently Asian landscape, and several other editions and translations similarly evoke a specifically Asian atmosphere, for instance through depicting the lush tropical vegetation of South-East Asia (Xyz's 2008 French edition) or a close-up of a female Asian face (Alfaguara's 2007 Spanish edition and Little Brown's English 2007 hardcover). In addition, not only the author Thien but many of her characters, too, have Asian origins, and Asia is a prominent place in *Certainty*, a place where protagonists come from, where they travel back to, where they meet. Indeed, Asia is central here and permeates the novel in the references to Vancouver's Chinatown, to Tai Chi classes, to Chinese food, and to characters speaking in Cantonese. We also witness Chinese rituals, for instance when after Gail's death an empty chair is kept at the table for departed spirits (see 9). One might even suggest that the structure of the entire novel is informed not only by a Chinese box pattern, but also by a very Chinese obsession with family, as it follows not a chronological logic but that of family ties, moving back and forth in time, tracing the ghosts of ancestors in the lives of contemporary protagonists.

The novel certainly stands in a long tradition of writing in English about the East, or, as it was once called, the Orient. More specifically, with its Asian focus it stands in a tradition of what Edward Said famously termed Orientalism. Orientalism, according to Said, is a mode of Western writing depicting the East as the opposite of the West; as a foil onto which the West may project everything it does not want to acknowledge in its own culture. Hence, the East is depicted as a place of despotic tyrants, sexual exploitation of women, and of drugs, implicitly making the West, its opposite, a place of democracy, equal rights, and reason. According to Said, this mode of depicting the East implies a clear power hierarchy, and Orientalism becomes a tool in the hands of the West to control the image of the East: "Orientalism puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand." (7).

It is as if Thien deliberately set out to destroy such Orientalist clichés. In *Certainty*, 'the East' as such does not exist; instead, there are various Eastern players – the Chinese, the Malaysians, the Japanese – and they are by no means a homogenous group as the war between the various Asian nations depicted in the novel forcefully reminds us. Likewise, 'the West' as such does not exist. Canada, Britain, and the Netherlands all play a role in this novel, but these places do not add up to one monolithic 'West'. And what about Australia? Is it part of 'the West'? Geographically speaking, it is located east of the East, east for example of China. There is no East-West antagonism here, and the major historical conflict is between two Eastern

powers, Malaysia and Japan. Moreover, the Westerners are certainly in no position of power towards the East here, and the novel shows the British cowardly forsaking the Bornese they had colonised as soon as the Japanese advance. In an exact reversal of power hierarchies as imagined by Said, the Canadian soldier and author of the war diary is shown as a prisoner-of-war at the mercy of the Japanese. In short, Thien's novel disrupts Orientalist patterns, and the title leads us astray, for nothing is certain in *Certainty*. This book is profoundly dis-orienting, or better, dis-orientalising.

As Said's sources were texts and images from the Age of Empire, and Thien is a novelist of the 21st century, this might not come as a surprise. Also, Said focused on the Near and Middle East, whereas *Certainty* is set in East Asia. Furthermore, Thien, with her Asian roots, is of course not the typical Western writer Said had in mind when he developed his concept of Orientalism. However, Thien's depiction of Asia also frustrates more contemporary expectations. British North Borneo, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands – the spatial setting of the novel is a very colonial, or postcolonial, one, and so is the temporal setting, crucially centring on the departure of the British, on the arrival of new oppressors in Borneo – the Japanese – and on the early days of Malaysian independence. Schooled in postcolonial thought, we might expect Thien to focus on the clash of colonisers and colonised, but this hardly plays a role at all. Perhaps, with Homi Bhabha, we might expect hybrid characters constantly negotiating Eastern and Western influences within themselves. Thien, however, seems to take us a step further, to a world in which all distinctions between East and West begin to dissolve and to lose importance.

This shows for instance in the temporal structure of the novel. Without warning, often from one sentence to the next, the narration shifts from present to past tense and back, sometimes superimposing two scenes located on different temporal levels:

> The first time he [Matthew] stepped onto an airplane, it was 1953. He was eighteen years old and heartbroken. From the air he gazed down at Sandakan, the tidy rooftops, the vast plantations and, surrounding everything, jungle. … As the airplane rose higher, the thread that connected Matthew to the town grew taunt, stretching, until it finally gave way. When the plane turned towards Australia, he looked down and saw the island of Borneo, so grand and beautiful in his imagination, diminish to a speck on the wide sea.
>
> That memory merges into another, of his daughter, standing in the departure lounge of Vancouver airport. He watches as his daughter embraces his wife. They are at ease with one another, they have always been, their attachment visible for all to see. She is twenty-four years old, full of hopes, expectations, on her way to study in Europe. (54–55)

Often, the protagonists are unsure of their temporal situation, and hover uncertainly between different temporal periods of their lives as in a dream: "There are mornings when Matthew wakes and he forgets that he is old. He thinks that he is seven, perhaps ten years old, but then it is like being on a hilltop in a fog. He cannot see five feet ahead or five feet back." (46). Tellingly, the characters are time and again depicted in

the moment of emerging from sleep, as if emerging from a different time. In the first few chapters Matthew, for instance, is shown waking up months after Gail's death, in the British North Borneo of his childhood (see 17; 23), during a Japanese attack in January 1945 (see 31), and in 1963 as a 28-year-old immigrant in Vancouver (see 29). The peculiar temporal structure seems to suggest that the past and the present, or to be more precise: the Asian past and the Western present, cannot be separated but are inextricably interwoven.

The dissolution of East-West oppositions also shows in a marked absence of dialect. None of the characters speak Chinese or Malaysian English; all speak Standard English, and Thien tellingly refuses to other her Asian characters linguistically. Physical markers of Asianness are likewise absent. There is no single reference to skin colour, to almond-shaped eyes or jet-black hair, and all such clichés are meticulously avoided. Physical descriptions more generally are omitted. What does Gail Lim look like? We do not know. This, however, is perhaps precisely Thien's point: physicality does not matter. What matters is what Thien presents us with: the protagonists' words, thoughts, and anxieties. In the world of *Certainty*, these have little to do with biological essentialism. Finally, the blurring of East-West dichotomies shows onomastically, and several of the Asian protagonists have markedly Western names – 'Gail' for instance, or 'Matthew'. As a result, it might take the reader a while to imagine these characters as Chinese-Malaysians; if one is confronted with a character named 'Matthew' and has little description of his physical appearance, many readers will almost automatically imagine him to be a Westerner. Here, as elsewhere, the novel frustrates our expectations.

Unwriting Trauma

Certainty is frustrating in another way, too: in its preference for the unremarkable. This is not a book of wartime heroes, or criminals, of lost sons, or first love revived. There are no spectacular stories here; rather, these are everyday stories about friends meeting for dinner, the everyday struggles of married life, or the drab reality of hospitals. Even Gail's death is unspectacular, and she does not die in far-away Borneo on the quest to explore her father's childhood but in a local Canadian hospital, of common pneumonia diagnosed too late. It is this shift towards the unremarkable that shows best in her representation of trauma. The object of Gail's second, journalistic quest – the wartime diary – captures this turn towards the mundane in a mise-en-abyme of the entire novel. Like Gail's father's past, the diary is a secret to be deciphered, as Sullivan had encoded it so that his Japanese jailors could not read it. Gail sets high hopes in its decryption: "She had wanted to believe that once the code was broken so much in William Sullivan's life, in his children's lives, would come

clear, that a line could be drawn from beginning to end and a true narrative emerge." (216). Yet, when the diary finally does yield its meaning, it comes as a surprise:

> In the diary, there is no detailing of violence witnessed and endured, of friends executed, of resistance. That, in the end, is what Gail finds so startling. She knows, through her research, that in the Hong Kong camp, a third of the men died before the war ended. In the prisoner-of-war camp in Sandakan, only six of three thousand men lived to see liberty. (220)

None of this is in the diary; instead it records what time the prisoners got up in the morning, the kind of trees that grew outside the camp, the difficulty of preparing a proper cup of tea without a cup – what a disappointment! This disappointment, though, is a telling one, and it mirrors our own disappointment when reading Thien's novel with its many depictions of the prosaic nature of everyday life. The way Gail reads the diary parallels the way we read the novel, frustrated in our expectations, realising that life sometimes is much more prosaic than we would admit.

This frustration, however, might be of a strategic nature. By shifting the focus away from large-scale events in world history, away from the clashes of Eastern and Western civilisations, away from the traumata these clashes might have caused, towards the quotidian, Thien readjusts the reader's perspective and perception. Tellingly, the novel repeatedly focuses on instances when the senses are sharpened, for example when it describes Bornese fishermen who dive below the surface to listen for fish, so hard that they can actually tell apart different species. Gail, the radio journalist, carries her tape recorder wherever she goes. In the evenings, she listens to her tapes and realises how they make her hear more than what she remembers:

> On days when her mind wanders, she randomly loads a reel onto the player, puts the earphones on, listens. For Gail, the devotion lies in more than the words spoken. It is the words spoken at a specific moment in time, in a particular place. A child singing in the background, a pause in the telling, an old woman wetting her lips, smoothing her dress. (195)

Thien's novel likewise sharpens the readers' senses, making us notice the subtle tones, the background noises of everyday life of second-generation Chinese-Canadians such as Gail.

There is one symbolic scene that encapsulates this shift of focus towards the more subdued voices perfectly, and again, it rewrites the representation of trauma. At one point, Matthew travels back to Malaysia to meet his childhood love Ani. When they meet, he tells her how, when he had last travelled to Sandakan, the place of their shared childhood, a film crew had set up their equipment, preparing to film a documentary about the local prisoner-of-war camp. That story, the official story of large-scale politics and wartime clashes, of the traumata they have caused, is the story that will be told, and preserved on film for a mass audience. It works, the novel

suggests, through the repetition of iconic moments and images that in their iconicity transcend the individual:

> In one scene, he told her, a prisoner was separated from the others. He was beaten, and then a soldier standing behind him placed his pistol against the man's head. The man struggled, but he was forced to his knees. The soldier fired, and the man's body jerked, then slumped into the dust. His head was twisted to the right, ear to the ground, eyes still open. When the filming stopped, he relaxed his body and turned over, staring for a moment at the heavens above. Then he pushed himself to standing and wiped the dust from his clothes. Immediately, the blood in his hair and on the ground was cleaned away. The scene was repeated many times, the cameras moving towards the man and then away. (284)

In contrast, the personal story of Matthew and Ani will not be documented – unless in Thien's novel. By shifting the focus away from the grand récits and the violent clashes of nations to such unremarkable narratives, Thien asks us to consider the less spectacular stories occluded by official history – these narratives might mean nothing in the context of History; yet they mean everything for the individuals involved. Thus Thien asks us to adopt an individualising, personalising focus; in a word: to subjectivise history.

This novel about what Eleanor Ty aptly terms "unremarkable characters in not so famous places" (51) might leave us frustrated. Where is the East here? Where the West? Where is the conflict, where reconciliation? We find little of this in *Certainty*. Our frustration might prove productive, though, and by disorienting Chinese-Canadian literature Thien encourages us to question our own notions of intercultural encounter. At the same time, Thien's refusal to engage in oppositional modes of received postcolonial writing should make us think twice about the validity of more traditional postcolonial theory for ethnic minorities in Canada today. Perhaps questions of ethnicity simply no longer play such a prominent role for so-called ethnic writers in Canada today. Revealingly, Thien stated in an interview that to her it is not important whether a person is from the Occident or the Orient: "What binds my characters together, regardless of their background is that they have so many similar questions." (qtd. in Ty 54).

Certainty shifts the focus from collective to individual identity, implicitly undermining ethnicity as marker of identity. On the one hand, shared ethnicity can make for very different lives, as in the case of Matthew and Ani, who end up worlds apart; on the other hand, one does not have to share ethnic roots with someone to find love, as the Malaysian Ani and her Dutch husband demonstrate. In other words: Thien's novel is an ethnic novel that is in the process of erasing its own ethnicity. It is the ethnic novel as anti-ethnic, or rather post-ethnic text. Again, the novel visualises this in an image; an image that is at the heart of Matthew's trauma. A moment before he is executed by the Japanese, Matthew's father asks his son to bury a glass jar with

family documents in a rice field; decades later, Matthew returns from Canada to dig up the jar, but can no longer find it. It is as if the past had vanished, as if the Canadian Matthew could no longer connect to his former life in Asia. Perhaps this is not such a bad thing; perhaps it would be an act of liberation if he finally stopped digging, freeing him both from his trauma and an identity defined in narrowly ethnic terms. To stop digging up the roots of his trauma, digging up his Asian roots might set him free from an identity shaped by the past. Or, as Ansel puts it with reference to Nietzsche, "the ability to forget is what brings us peace" (85).

Conclusion

Trauma and Asianness are interlinked in *Certainty* precisely because both should be overcome, and just as Thien deflates trauma she deflates ethnicity as marker of identity. It is as if her novel argued against letting one's own life be defined by either trauma or ethnicity. Thien's novel relates trauma and Asianness not in what might be the obvious way – that being Asian in Canada might prove traumatic at times. Asians are never discriminated against here, and racism hardly plays a role at all in this novel. The connections between trauma and Asianness are of a different nature. For some characters, their Asian origins are intricately interwoven with the trauma of their childhood, as in the case of Matthew for whom dissociating himself from his Asian roots is part and parcel of the process of a dissociation from his trauma. This is how trauma and ethnic identity connect here more generally speaking: both define identity in terms of the past – trauma through a specific event in the past, ethnicity through biological heritage. It is as if Thien set out to free her protagonists of these constraints, as if she suggested: do not let the past define you.

For both, the representation of trauma and the representation of ethnicity, she employs strikingly similar strategies. Thien's rewriting of trauma includes a frustration of our expectations (e. g. when we realise that the wartime diary does not voice the trauma we expect to find) and, more specifically, a deflation of History, i. e. a shift away from History to individual, often unremarkable stories. The trauma of the Canadian prisoner-of-war dissolves into very practical questions of everyday life in a camp; the trauma of the Japanese occupation of Malaysia gives way to a very personal story of two lovers finding, and losing, each other; Gail's premature death dissolves into her family members' many practical questions of how to live on. Thien turns the Grand Narrative, the grand récit – which trauma is – into multiple smaller, individual, often rather uneventful stories. She shrinks trauma to human scale, confronting the pathos of trauma with the bathos of the quotidian.

Of course, the deconstruction of grand récits is a common strategy in contemporary writing (although it is perhaps less common as a strategy of dealing with trauma). Crucially, this strategy here not only applies to Thien's representation of trauma

but also of ethnicity. There is nothing like 'Asianness' in the world of *Certainty*. As in her deconstruction of the trauma narrative, Thien breaks apart the concept of Asian-Canadian identity and shows what life actually looks like for Asians in Canada (and elsewhere), demonstrating that on a smaller, more mundane level, ethnicity might not really matter all that much. Of course, like many of the characters, Gail is Asian, but it is not really of importance when it comes down to the real stories that add up to her life.

Earlier Asian-Canadian writing focused on the enigma of arrival, the culture shock of settling in Canada, and on the hardships of integration – apart from Kogawa's *Obasan* (1981) or Choy's *The Jade Peony* (1995) one might think of Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Café* (1990), Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* (1994) or Rohinton Mistry's *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (1987). These are books about intercultural conflict; *Certainty* is not. For younger Chinese-Canadian writers such as Thien, ethnicity, the clash of cultures, and the traumata this clash might have caused no longer seem to matter all that much.

In 2006 – the year the book was published – the Canadian government officially apologised to Chinese-Canadians, finally seeking to redress the injustice of the so-called Head Tax. As is common knowledge today, the Head Tax was levied in 1885 and applied only to Chinese immigrants in an attempt to keep the Chinese out of Canada, as they were considered "obnoxious to a free community," as the 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration stated. In 1923, it was followed by an official policy of barring Chinese immigration altogether. Of course, the publication of Thien's book in the same year as the Canadian government's apology is a coincidence; yet, it is perhaps a symbolic one. At the precise moment that White Canada acknowledges its racist past and proves willing to remember, Thien's novel signals a Chinese-Canadian's willingness to forget the specifically Asian-Canadian trauma and to move beyond all notions of ethnic antagonisms.

Thus, with Thien's novel, Canadian literature takes an interesting step. Set in Australia, North Borneo, Malaysia, Hong Kong, the Netherlands and Canada, peopled by Dutch-Malaysian, Malaysian-Hong-Kongnese and Chinese-Canadian characters, the world of *Certainty* is a global one indeed. This is not to say that the past no longer matters – Malaysian-born Matthew for instance is largely defined by the memories of his time in Asia. But so is the Dutch war photographer Sipke, and the Canadian soldier who kept the diary. It is, this anti-essentialist book suggests, memories that matter, not ethnicity. Asianness in *Certainty* is in the past and hardly present in Gail's life in 21st century Canada, coming to the fore only when she starts digging up her father's history. The book seems to suggest: Asianness, perhaps more generally ethnicity, is a thing of the past.

At the same time, the novel moves beyond the traditional image of Canada as a mosaic of ethnic groups. Thien's characters are often not confined to ethnic communities. To stay within the metaphor, here the panorama of Canadian society is

not composed of mosaicked stones but rather painted in watercolours, and the edges blur. Recently, transcultural studies have moved away from the obsession with ethnicity. Works such as Arjun Appadurai's studies of globalised culture suggest that we no longer focus on essentialist notions of belonging.

> … Primordia (whether of language or skin color or neighborhood or kinship) have become globalized. That is, sentiments whose greatest force is their ability to ignite intimacy into a political sentiment and turn locality into a staging ground for identity, have become spread over vast and irregular spaces, as groups move, yet stay linked to one another through sophisticated media capabilities. (41)

Instead of following an anachronistic model of dominant majorities and ethnic minorities, original settlers and later immigrants, Appadurai defines identity in terms of global, deterritorialised 'scapes': of ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes: "These landscapes … are the building blocks of what (extending Benedict Anderson) I would like to call *imagined worlds*, that is, the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe." (33). In some of her characters, Thien seems tentatively to offer us a glimpse of what such globalised, post-ethnic identities might look like.

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When Trauma Meets Trauma
Immigrants and Indigenes

Hartmut Lutz

Land-Learning and Land-Leaving

Aboriginal peoples, Jo-Ann Episkenew wrote in the first chapter of *Taking Back Our Spirits*: *Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing* (2009), had no literacy as we know it in Europe, but they could "'read' the land" (3 f.) – a skill we in Europe do not possess. Few nations in Europe, if any, besides the Basques, Sami or other European Indigenes, have a territorial residency extending over millennia which allowed them to develop what might be called "land learnedness" or "land knowledge." I have written about our inability to read the land elsewhere (2014: 105–153), and I've said that this also has to do with the almost incessant warfare and the massive migrations, removals and ethnic cleansings European wars entailed. And yet even today in Europe people who were or are forcefully evicted and driven off their homelands, or who fled wars and destruction, are traumatized. They most often sorely miss their ancestral territories, where they knew their way around, where their cultures fit, and where their stories are rooted.

At the end of World War II, 11 to 14 million Germans were evicted from their homes and ethnically cleansed out of central and eastern Europe (see Douglass), in a painful attempt to secure future peace by creating mono-ethnic nation states. Simultaneously, millions of Poles and Czechs were evicted or persuaded to move into the territories that had been or still were being cleansed of Germans. I grew up 1945–1950 in an overcrowded apartment building that contained, besides new arrivals like the members of our extended family, a multicultural community made up by very few locals and a majority of refugees and expellees. Most of them were women, children and elderly. As a young child, sitting under the kitchen table, I listened to traumatic accounts, which I came to understand later. They often had to do with atrocities and nearly all with loss of home. Most women were shy to share their stories in public. But years later, in post-war West Germany, groups of expellees became politically very vocal in voicing their multiple victimizations. "Heimatvertriebene" as political lobby groups often managed to turn their own victimization into an asset when bargaining for compensation, while remaining silent about their generation's victimization of millions of Jews, "Gypsies", Poles, Russians and other Europeans. However, regardless of the essential ethics of addressing or not addressing the victimizations of people who are forced to leave their homes, there seems to

be general agreement, that losing one's "Heimat" is a form of victimization resulting in trauma. And it is trans-generational.

Traumatized Settlers Traumatizing Indigenous Populations

When thinking about the displacement of Indigenous North Americans by Settlers from Europe, we tend to focus on the trauma of the Indigenes – and for very good reasons. But the longer I thought about the settler-colonized relationship regarding "Heimat," the more I came to wonder whether the Settlers as emigrants from Europe to North America are not also to be understood as being in a situation comparable to that of European refugees and expellees after World War II.

The Settlers, too, were forced to leave their *Heimat*, usually for economic but often also for political reasons, or because wars had devastated their homes. Regardless of whether they were political asylum seekers (*Asylanten*), expellees (*Vertriebene*), or were forced to leave because of economic depravation and hunger (*Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge*), Settlers arrived as people traumatized by their losses. They share with inner-European refugees the traumata of losing their land, losing their loved ones, losing their cultures, and in most Settlers' cases even losing their mother tongues. That such traumata are indeed inter-generational becomes obvious when we read the many fictional texts and life writings in Canadian Literature by second and third generation Settlers.[1]

However, once they have become immigrants in the new place, first generation Settlers are under enormous pressure to be "successful." They need to be successful in order to survive. They need to be successful in order to prove to themselves and their fellow immigrants or families, that it was worth the uprooting, and that their losses were more than compensated by their being in the "new" place. And they also need success stories to write back home, that their move was a "good" one, and that they are now thriving in the new land – even if they never managed to fulfill their dreams of a farmstead in the West but ended up in a sweatshop near the East coast. Although collectively traumatized, first generation Settlers tend to block out painful memories in order to celebrate their "successes." But the repression (*Verdrängung*) of painful memories and traumata leave psychological traces, e. g. in the form of "forgetting," emotional denial, and distorted perceptions of reality. Even if it is never addressed, the trauma is undeniably there, and if it is not addressed openly, it lingers and operates in the subconscious. As such, the "forgetting" may contribute to what Episkenew calls the blandness of White supremacist Settler history in Canada, which is oblivious of the victimization of Aboriginal peoples (see 6) – and, I may add, which tries to be oblivious of the Settlers' own emigration-related traumata.

I remember reading somewhere the axiom, that a traumatized person, in her or his grief and suffering does not as a rule have the emotional strength to empathize

with the suffering of others. If that axiom is true, it might constitute a supplementary reason why European Settler immigrants often seem so un-enabled to empathize with those they are dispossessing. Callousness vis-a-vis the Indigenes provides settlers with an ideological prop in the denial of their structural complicity in the act of colonizing. Again, let me quote Episkenew: "This distorted collective vision mollifies the guilt that settlers experience when faced with evidence that their prosperity is built on the suffering of others." (6).

Sharing Trauma – Sharing Stories

In turn, the traumatized Indigenous victims of colonization tend to perceive their "White" oppressors as just that: victimizers. By experiencing daily their own dispossession Indigenous people often appear un-enabled to empathize with the colonizers as the traumatized victims of emigration. In their perception, Settlers seem to be without roots, but not as uprooted. In this politically, socially and culturally asymmetric relationship, it seems to me that the trauma of one victimized collective necessarily impedes and blocks an understanding of the trauma of the other, and vice-versa.

White Settlers can blissfully "forget" or deny the fact of their uprooting. For the Indigenes it is different, they can never forget colonization. In Canada, their own country, they are outnumbered in a ratio 24:1, so they are visibly confronted with their marginalization in their own *Heimat* and reminded of it on a daily basis. In order to empathetically understand the Settlers as also traumatized, they have to mentally distance themselves from their learned victim positions. The Settlers, in turn, have to relinquish cherished assumptions and learn to acknowledge that the myth of "natural" White supremacy is another term for the systemic racism which privileges them. How often have I heard from White Canadians that Indians are too privileged in matters of taxation, medical care and education and therefore they should stop complaining. Such comments seem blissfully unaware of the fact that it is customary in capitalist societies to pay rent, and that there seems to be a dirth of knowledge about treaty making and Indian policies before and after confederation. Reading Episkenew's *Taking Back our Sprits* could teach obtuse settlers differently. Very often, and this is true of much of Can Lit as well, there appears to be little awareness of the Indigenous presence in Canada at all – a kind of *Verdrängung* in psycho-analytical terms.

And this is where, according to Episkenew, literature can become a key towards a mutual understanding, because of "the power of literature both to heal Indigenous people from postcolonial traumatic stress response and to cure the settlers from the delusions learned from their mythology. In this way Indigenous literature is able to construct a common truth about our shared past." (15)

Fortunately, the bleak picture I painted of the unawareness and lack of mutual empathy among Indigenous and settler Canadian alike, is an incomplete and one-sided one. Many non-Indigenous or immigrant authors show empathy for the Indigenes as victims.[2] Similarly, in some texts by Indigenous writers, we find an astounding empathy with their immigrant dispossessors,[3] as, for example, the second "Song" in Beth Cuthand's long poem "Four Songs for the Fifth Generation" beautifully demonstrates, which is here quoted in full:

Drums, chants, and rattles
pounded earth and
heartbeats
heartbeats

"They were our life the life
of the prairies
We loved them
and they loved us.
Sometimes they were so many
they flowed like a river
over the hill into the valleys.

I saw them. I knew them.
I helped my mother
cut away their skin
chop their bones
and dry their meat
Many times
many times.
Aye, but now they are gone
Ghosts all ghosts.

The sickness came
we were hungry
I saw my children die
one by one
one by one.

There was no freedom then my girl
They were stronger
They thought they knew
What it was their God wanted.

Aye, but now they are gone
Ghosts just ghosts.

Sometimes I think I hear
their thunder smell their dust
at night my girl
at night I dream
dream of their warm blood
their hides covering
Aye, covering all my children
In their sleep."

Drums, chants, and rattles
pounded earth and
heartbeats
heartbeats.

"That's the old Simmons homestead.
He's dead now
I don't know what happened
to his wife and children.

Back in the thirties
we cut posts for him
10 cents a post that was good money
back then.
Clarence Simmons was his name
came from England
with his skinny little wife
and a bunch of pale scrawny little kids.

Poor Simmons we felt sorry for him
so we helped him
as much as we could.

Back in the thirties,
things weren't so bad for us
as it was for the homesteaders
We hadn't cut our trees
or tore up the land.

We still had deer
and fish
rabbits
and gophers and fat dogs
hehheh

But the settlers really suffered.
It was pitiful.
My dad would tell us
'take this meat over to the Simmons
place. Drop it at the door.'

So I'd ride over real quiet
and hang it by the house

Poor Simmons
one day he hung himself
from a tree
in his yard.
Couldn't take it no more.
Dad found him,
cut him down
and laid him real gentle
on the ground
under the tree.

That was one of the few times
I ever saw him cry.

I don't know what makes
some men
go on living
while other men
give up."

Drums, chants, and rattles
pounded earth and
heartbeats
heartbeats.

"It was 1960
when dad and mom
got the vote.
All us kids got copies of Canada's
'Declaration of Human Rights'
and took them home
and put them up
all over the walls.
Yeah, that was a great day
For Canada
'Oh Canada
Our true north strong and free.'

We moved south when I was ten
to a town with sidewalks
and running water
and a playground with a pool
not a lake
'Hey Injuns!' Yer not allowed
in the pool.
You'll get it dirty,
dirty.'

We closed ranks after that
spent a lot of time
exploring the creek.

My brother found an arrowhead
Some white kid said
It didn't belong o us,
So my brother beat him up.

My brother was always
fighting
It seemed
he had a rage
that wouldn't go out.
Me, I just retreated
and retreated
until I couldn't
find myself.

There was a boy down the street
who had it in
for my brother
called him dirty Indian.
He'd sick his dog on him
every time
we'd walk to school.
We took to walking the long way,
Everyone except my brother.

One time my brother hit that dog
smack between the eyes
with a rock
The old dog tucked his tail
between his legs and
went howling off.
Behind the house.

The boy came to our place
with a baseball bat
We were all going to go out
and kick that kid around,
But Dad said 'No
let your brother
fight it out.'

They were pretty evenly matched
the kid with his bat
my brother with his stones
they fought
for an hour

kicking
hitting
scratching
punching
thwacking
ripping

Mom wanted to stop them
but Dad said no.
'He's got to take a stand.'

Finally it was over
nobody won.

That kid never sicked
his dog on my brother again.
but
my brother's rage
never did go away."

Drums, chants, and rattles
pounded earth and
heartbeats
heartbeats.

"I don't want to go
to a white high school
Mama.
My spirit would die
In a place like that
I love our little school
us Indians
we help each other.
We care.
We share smokes, Mom.

When I grow up
will my kids
have to fight
for a place in the neighbourhood
too?"

Drums, chants, and rattles
pounded earth and
heartbeats
heartbeats. (70–82)

Notes

1 Cf. for example writings by Sandra Birdsell, Martha Blum or Janice Kulyk Keefer.
2 Cf. works by Robert Kroetsch, Margaret Laurence, Laura Goodman Salverson or Rudy Wiebe.
3 Cf. writings by Bernard Assiniwi, Beth Cuthand, Rachel Quitsualik.

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Responses to Indigenous Trauma in Canada

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights

Robert Schwartzwald

I begin this essay by drawing upon my experience teaching "Conflits et mémoire historique" – Conflicts and Historical Memory – a class in the interdisciplinary Master's program in International Studies at the Université de Montréal. Of the thirty-five students in the class, at least half were international, some from countries or regions that were experiencing serious conflict as we met – Brazil, for example, where the lead-up to the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff unfolded over the semester – or that have suffered considerable trauma over many years – Colombia, Mexico, and Israel/Palestine, to name but three. The other half came from a country that is awakening slowly to a centuries-long trauma endured by its Indigenous peoples. I speak, of course, of Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada's Report on Indian Residential Schools was released just as the class was getting underway, and so I was able to include it in my syllabus.

For the most part, the Canadian students in the seminar claimed no prior knowledge of residential school abuse beyond the vague notion that it had occurred, and therefore held no advantage on this matter in relation to their international classmates. This should not be so surprising. Speaking of programs and exhibitions devoted to Indigenous peoples in Canadian national museums and heritage institutions in the 1990s and 2000s, Ruth Phillips has noted, for example, how "the memorialization of past oppression and suffering" did not figure prominently: "It was not until a federal process of compensation and reconciliation was under way that national representations of residential schools trauma were developed by the two foundations established and funded as part of the national compensation strategy." (307).[1] The situation as described by Phillips is exemplary of a more general point made by Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham. As they remind us in their introduction to a 2009 issue of *English Studies in Canada* (*ESC*) devoted to the question, "The significance of residential schooling in the public imaginary, and the immense stakes of its recognition as a history alive in the present, belongs to a politics of truth in settler societies, where the difficulty of establishing the truth of settlement's violence cannot be underestimated." (5).

In what might appear to be somewhat of a paradox, my non-Canadian students had less trouble integrating Indigneous trauma into the broader questions raised

by the seminar, in large part because they proceeded analogically. For example, a Chinese female student spoke about how the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women (not in the purview of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission but obviously a related issue) resonated with what she had learned about the abuse of Chinese women under the Japanese occupation. The silencing, the shame, the denial – all were familiar to her. In the obstinate refusal of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Conservative government to convene an inquiry on this question, she saw a parallel with the historical resistance in Japan to dealing with Chinese grievances. While this student may well have been *surprised* by this particular Canadian reality, she proceeded to incorporate it into an understanding of Canada that is being constructed in the present, as she lives and studies here. The Canadian students, on the other hand, could not proceed by analogy. As citizens, they were confronted with assuming the burden of this history, of figuring out a way to take responsibility for it, in other words, of accepting the legacy of what had been an effaced or unrecognized genocidal practice and is now becoming an incontrovertible part of collective memory – a form of memory, of course, not necessarily validated by personal experience, even a recovered one, but which often involves the rewriting of a community, or State narrative of origins.

It did not take long, however, before several students began to present a more troubling response to our study of the TRC Report. In our discussion, they intimated that the proceedings of the Commission, built largely around survivor testimony and storytelling, were fundamentally problematic insofar as they (re-)positioned Indigenous people as *victims*; that these proceedings risked once again robbing Indigenous peoples of agency and eliciting instead a paternalistic impulse to 'help' from non-Indigenous people in Canada. Now, this line of critique has certainly been present in scholarly and activist interventions. In the Introduction to the *ESC* special issue, Henderson and Wakeham, as if anticipating the students' concerns, recognize how "the question of the TRC's relation to justice also seems crucially linked to how survivor testimony will be heard, framed, and circulated" (14). They also allow that the TRC's focus on the abuses of residential schooling "may be justifiably critiqued as a part-for-whole substitution which allows the state to sidestep issues of land claims and constitutional change" (4). Still, I was taken aback by how quickly my students adopted this critical position to throw the entire TRC process into question. It seemed to me as if they had adopted the critique without the necessary, concomitant prudence urged by Henderson and Wakeham: "(T)he selection of residential schooling from among other aspects of a multifaceted system of colonialism *is not a good enough reason* [my emphasis] for maintaining a position of cynicism in relation to the politics around apology, compensation, healing, and reconciliation." (6). This is because for them, "the irruption of the memory of residential schooling into Canada's public spheres has the status of a 'truth-event,'" theorized by Ian Baucom as "something apparently singular that, precisely insofar as it appears as an excep-

tion or anomaly, 'demonstrates the repressed or previously unrecognizable truth of a historical situation'" (Henderson and Wakeham 5).

The "unrecognizable truth of this historical situation" would be the overriding colonialist project that systematically dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their lands, destroyed the bases of their traditional economies, devalued and prohibited their spiritual and cultural practices, and sought to "kill the Indian" in their children, not only through the IRS program, but also through the placement of Indigenous children in white foster homes, notably (though far from exclusively) in the "Sixties Scoop." A key element of this colonial truth is that it continues into the present, as evidenced by struggles over pipeline routes, stalled land claims negotiations, and the continuing fate of Indigenous children. In fact, more Indigenous children are in government care today than at the height of residential schools, "a statistic that [offers] a sobering view of the current state of reconciliation in Canada involving Indigenous families who continue to struggle against the contemporary manifestations of colonialism in Canada" (Corntassel, Chaw-win-is, and T'lakwadzi 151).

The TRC's *Calls to Action* enumerates and elaborates upon 94 recommendations meant to enact reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, but if this work is presented as one of shared responsibility, it is nevertheless crucially predicated upon the recognition of the wrongs committed – what the TRC Report calls a "cultural genocide," but which many scholars and activists call a genocide *tout court*. This is one way to understand the significance, and prominence, of the testimony from survivors of residential schools. While testimony finds its way into several sections of the Report, an entire volume of some 250 pages, *The Survivors Speak*, is devoted to it, largely comprised of excerpts from lengthier statements.[2]

Why, I wondered, were some of the students so anxious to discount this stage, or skip it entirely? How could they, having just discovered the disgrace of the IRS and the mass trauma to which it gave rise, so expediently decide that the TRC's reliance on testimony had undermined its own goals? How could they allow themselves the satisfaction of such a position, given how they had barely begun to think about this issue in the first place? I have come to believe that the students' resistance to testimony needs to be considered in light of two crucial aspects of the TRC: the purposes of storytelling and the nature of reconciliation.

First, storytelling. Perhaps the students' resistance to testimony lay precisely in their own inability to articulate an appropriate response to it. Perhaps it is the essentially passive role they imagined for themselves – serving essentially as "receptors" for speech acts that rehearsed past wrongs – that led them to ascribe this passivity to the witnesses who are duly recast as victims without agency. Of course, the issue of non-Indigenous response to testimony is a problem that has been raised by a number of scholars and activists (or better yet, scholar-activists). To give but one example, Matthew Dorrell argues that

> to posit that reconciliation can be accomplished by national subjects solely through respectful listening once again places the burden of 'working on recovery' wholly upon First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and insists that no ethical re-evaluation or reassessment on the part of national subjects is necessary. (42)

This is certainly true, but even so, Dorrell's point does not so much question the value of "respectful listening" – indeed, nothing is possible without it – as it insists that "respectful listening" need not, and should not, be an entirely passive process on the part of non-Indigenous people. To give an example from outside the realm of contemporary testimony, the agential implications of what we might call "historical respectful listening" for archival work are explored by Raymond Frogner, now chief archivist at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba:

> Archivists cannot interpret the multiple, relative truths of power and authority that inspired a record's creation. Archivists can, however, address the absence of Aboriginal roles in the context of colonial records creation. As our archival descriptions move toward a detached and digitally connected archival context this becomes more practical. The content of such a juxtaposed context could depict relevant languages and worldviews as described by appropriate Aboriginal representation. This avoids redescribing colonial records and puts them in a deeper context of both the colonial records creating environment and the discourse of the contemporary descriptions. It also provides for the participation of oral histories of Aboriginal elders that do not easily fit the format of our national descriptive standards. (46)

The point here, of course, is that far from passing over individual testimony, it is a *deepened* process of storytelling, or as Jeff Corntassel, Chaw-win-is, and T'lakwadzi term it, *re*-storying that contributes actively to a "counter-narrative to the Canadian state's notion of reconciliation" (141).[3]

The TRC Report also argues that individual testimony and stories, once uttered, are the building blocks of a process that will help Indigenous people reconcile with their families. In fact, this is the first order of reconciliation that is identified by the Report, *before* (not so much in the temporal sense as in the order of urgency for the individuals involved) reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Corntassel, Chaw-win-is, and T'lakwadzi, writing at an earlier moment in the TRC process, argued:

> The TRC needs to recognize where all survivors, families, communities, and nations are in terms of readiness for reconciliation. We must go slowly. We cannot force reconciliation. The IRSS (Indian Residential Schools Settlement) statements highlight the need for a community-based impetus to move beyond the TRC mandate toward *restorying* [my emphasis]. at the family and community levels. (143)

In their contribution to the *ESC* volume, Corntassel, Chaw-win-is, and T'lakwadzi introduce readers to haa-huu-pah, "forms of experiential knowledge and living histories" of the Nuu-Cha-Nulth peoples that "comprise part of the core teachings that Indigenous families transmit to future generations" and that "embody lived values that form the basis for Indigenous governance and regeneration" (137–138). Through a "Quu'asa family way storytelling methodology" (148), seven residential school survivors were interviewed around questions of homeland, family, restitution, and restorying, and invited more generally to "focus on the community, family, and individual impacts of residential school on their lives rather than framing the discussion around Indigenous reconciliation with Canada" (140). The objective here was to counter the "narrow way" of framing questions around the "devastating legacies" of Indian residential school abuse, broadening it to include "the lived experiences of resilience and resurgence that need to be shared with intergenerational survivors and other Indigenous peoples" (140). This holistic, systemic appreciation of how IRS testimony can be articulated within a broader process of intergenerational, familial, and community storytelling is clearly one response to the concern that the TRC process generates a reiterative performance of victimhood. If storytelling and testimony may indeed "not necessarily favor justice-seeking and the kind of profound political changes that national 'reconciliation' could be made to mean, in a different model of time where history was acknowledged as *persisting in the present* [my emphasis]" (Henderson and Wakeham 7), Quu'asa is an approach conceived by and intended for Indigenous people that belies the notion of testimony, or storytelling, as essentially an imposed practice that encourages unresolved mourning and keeps its victims oriented toward the past. On the other hand, it is an approach conceived by and intended for Indigenous people that at the same time demands a move away from the notion held by non-Indigenous people – in this case, my students – of testimony, or storytelling, as essentially an imposed practice that encourages unresolved mourning and keeps its victims oriented toward the past.

And this brings us to the politics of reconciliation. Dorrell reminds us that the verb "'to reconcile' is defined as to 'restore to peace and unity,' and all definitions related to reconciliation incorporate this return to a prior state" (37). For their part, Corntassel, Chaw-win-is, and T'lakwadzi contend that "at its core, reconciliation is a Western concept with religious connotations of restoring one's relationship to God" (145). Their conclusion is in line with Dorrell's: "Our overarching goal as Indigenous people should not be to restore an asymmetrical relationship with the state but to restory our communities toward justice." (145). Non-Indigenous people who wish to engage in acts of reparation and redress may feel forestalled or even shut out by such a position, insofar as it does not regard the establishment of sites of encounter between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as a priority; it certainly renders more difficult the ready adoption of the status of 'ally' that many non-Indigenous activists wish to assume. This status, I believe, is precisely what many of the students

desired, with or without recognizing it and without adequately reflecting upon its implications. Freshly apprised of the trauma of Indigenous peoples, they are anxious to translate their apprehension into ameliorative action. And yet, they are being cautioned by Indigenous scholars and activists. Just what are they being asked to think about?

In reflecting about what happened in my seminar, I have found a classical approach to trauma such as Dominick LaCapra's to be highly suggestive. In LaCapra's terms, what the TRC ought to elicit in non-Indigenous Canadians is a form of empathic unsettling and a commitment to work through their implication in Indigenous trauma. In this sense, the TRC Report must be recognized by them as speaking a loss that, for Indigenous peoples, is the consequence of *specific historical events*. Accordingly, the Report calls for a fulsome response from non-Indigenous readers, *not* vicarious identification. What is the difference? It lies in the very mode of address. Linda Warley has spoken about the rhetorical style and the rhetorical appeal of testimony.[4] If the rhetorical *style* is confession, the rhetorical *appeal* of testimony is above all pathos aimed at producing empathy. In these terms, we might understand vicarious identification to be a form of *settled* empathy (as in to settle, or occupy another's space), as opposed to LaCapra's call for unsettled empathy.

For LaCapra, a difficulty arises when empathy becomes an identity. Students, many activist by nature – at least in my program at Université de Montréal – want things to move forward, and sure of their status as allies, conclude that for them, the pedagogical and emancipatory functions of truth-telling in the Report are repetitious, redundant, or even unnecessary as they see themselves soon enough – too soon, perhaps – ready to join the fray and defend Indigenous demands. Curiously, the impatience to move *forward* can be confounded with a sentiment that it is time to move *on* – a unilateral decision at odds with the working through called for in this situation. In similar terms, when discussing responses to "difficult knowledge," Failler and Simon make a strong case for the importance of learning *from*, rather than *about*, Indigenous trauma. If the latter is normally accessed through statistical documents and analytical essays, the former arguably works best through personal testimony and storytelling.[5] These less settled, more volatile forms of narrative heighten our confrontation with "difficult knowledge emerging in response to histories of violence, abuse, and genocidal practices, past and present" (174). The impatience that leads to deploring the "victim status" supposedly conferred upon Indigenous people by the Report may thus be understood as a form of resistance to "difficult knowledge." As Failler and Simon explain:

> What is difficult about difficult knowledge in these instances is not just becoming aware of the terrible facts, but also, more precisely figuring out what to do with such knowledge and imagining how to learn from it, especially when it triggers our fears, defensiveness, aggression, or feelings of hopelessness, threatening to undo our fundamental frameworks for making sense of ourselves and the world around us. (174)

In the specific case of Indigenous trauma, this resistance may also be understood as a manifestation of the desire to overcome the anxiety attendant upon an absence – that is, the absence of knowledge, obscured or kept from us in our settler-colonial history – without doing the required work, as it were. For LaCapra, such anxiety must be lived with and worked through, otherwise "manic agitation" may set in. In such cases, "empathy is enacted through a fantasy of acquiring or inhabiting the other's knowledge and experience" (Failler and Simon 174). Under the guise of empathy, this form of identification is of course presumptuous and pre-emptive.

From this perspective, Dorrell's proposal to speak of "reconciling" instead of "reconciliation" is helpful in mitigating the rush to resolution. It is an attempt, as he puts it, "to focus on the generative and ongoing aspects of a less coercive process (where) the use of the gerund form of the verb emphasizes the necessarily agential and iterative nature of the processes of reconciling, distinguishing it from finalizing processes of reconciliation" (38). Once again, the issue is time and the work it enables, especially "encourag[ing] national subjects to (re-)consider their past and present relation to Indigenous peoples, to reflect on the past abuses carried out in their names, and to consider their current complicity in the oppression of Indigenous peoples" (40). For non-Indigenous people in Canada, to *reconsider* and *reflect upon* are necessary, active processes in response to the Indigenous restorying practices taking place.

These reflections upon restorying and reconciling lead me to consider more closely a grand pedagogical project and its approach to questions of Indigenous trauma in Canada. I speak of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg. Even if the considerable attention it pays to Indigenous issues is ample justification for focusing upon it here, it is also true that my interest in introducing the Museum as the second element of my analysis is undoubtedly inflected by opportunity: having been born and raised in Winnipeg, and still a frequent visitor to family and friends there, I saw the Museum take physical shape over the years and heard regularly from "local informants" about the controversies surrounding its siting and program.[6]

In its mission statement, the CMHR describes its tasks: "(1) to preserve and promote Canadian heritage; (2) to contribute to Canadian collective memory, and (3) to inspire and research and learning." (Busby, Muller and Woolford 16). As Ruth Phillips reminds us, "[b]ased on its web presence and mission statement, the CMHR belongs to the category of the peace museum in which historical representation is intended to perform redress and lead to future action …" (313–314). As a museum devoted to the history of a Great Idea,[7] the CMHR was not initially conceived as a site for exploring trauma, nor the complex issues attendant upon negotiating it. It was not meant to be a sustained meditation on the dialectics of mourning and melancholy, nor of absence and loss. In this sense, the Museum was not to be about memorializing *per se*,[8] but about educating its visitors, both in a nation-building and

a broader, humanistic sense. Yet, as Karen Busby, Adam Muller, and Andrew Woolford, the editors of *The Idea of a Human Rights Museum*, the collection of essays prepared during the years when the Museum and its exhibits were under construction and released to coincide with its opening, rightly point out "the museum's unavoidable dependence on memory, which serves to anchor its representational practice" whatever intentions the curators may have had. Accordingly, "that the memories present in the museum's exhibitions are often traumatic should come as no surprise given the CMHR's interest in explaining the reasons for continuing to champion the cause of human rights at home and abroad …" (Busby, Muller and Woolford 17).

That said, the tone set in the very first gallery of the Museum is resolutely optimistic, even if the results are more than a little perplexing. The left wall is set up as a journey through the ages, a timeline with signposts that identify "100 key moments from the advances and setbacks in our human rights journey."[9] Below the timeline and parallel to it, runs a series of images of great men – and some women[10] – who have made particularly significant contributions to enshrining the individual's rights to liberty, respect, and equality. However, a multimedia presentation on the opposite wall interferes with the linear, progress-oriented nature of this installation by asking whether human rights are universal or rooted in specific cultures and religions? In this way, it takes up the part of the introductory text that refers to the "conversations" people have had "throughout history and across cultures about how we should treat one another and what freedoms we ought to have." The question of the rights of collectivities as human rights is also broached: for example, an Inuit woman speaks of the collective right of her people to live as equals with other collectivities in Canada.[11]

In turning more specifically to the Museum's presentation of Indigenous issues in Canada, it is important to remember that the building was sited without any prior consultation on lands of great historical and spiritual significance to Indigenous peoples at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. To say the least, this was an inauspicious beginning. As the Museum neared completion, the curator of Indigenous exhibits, Tricia Logan, resigned in view of the Museum's decision not to use the term "genocide" to refer to the experiences of Canada's Indigenous peoples (Busby, Muller and Woolford 12–13). Logan's essay was also withdrawn from *The Idea of a Human Rights Museum* because it hadn't been properly vetted through federal channels. In the view of the volume's editors, "an opportunity was lost to foster dialogue about settler colonialism in Canada and about the role and responsibilities of the CMHR in representing the destructive and ongoing consequences of settler-colonial relations with Canada's Indigenous peoples" (13).

In an Afterword to the volume, two CMHR curators offer a broad defense of the museum's program and curatorial strategy with regard to Indigenous issues:

> Taken together, the Indigenous material across the galleries exposes violation, dispossession, and abuse, along with resistance, cultural renewal, and the continuing relevance of

> traditional knowledge. These exhibits were developed in collaboration with Indigenous elders, scholars, artists, and other individuals and communities. The integration of these stories throughout the CMHR illustrates how colonialism and reconciliation *involve* all, Indigenous and non-Indigenous [my emphasis]. Finally, care has been taken not to render Indigenous peoples passive victims of colonial violence; agency, struggle, and resistance are also emphasized. By incorporating such methodologies into our practices, we hope to begin articulating a decolonizing politics of reconciliation between Indigenous and settler communities, recognizing that there is still much to be done. (Giesbrecht and Curle 330)

In parsing this defense, we note at the outset the insistence on underscoring the participation of Indigenous peoples in determining the design and content of the exhibitions. In context, this must be read, at least in part, as a decision meant to repair the CMHR's initial failure to consult over the very site of the building. Treatments of "violation, dispossession, and abuse," we are told, will be balanced by an equal commitment to a holistic, presentist exposition of "resistance, cultural renewal, and the continuing relevance of traditional knowledge." The latter concerns are very much consonant with the approach that has guided Canadian museum displays of Indigenous content for the past quarter-century. These programs and projects "focused on the recovery of traditional knowledge, the celebration of contemporary innovation, and the representation of Aboriginal people's active participation in modernity rather than on memorialization of past oppression and suffering" (Phillips 307). At the CMHR, this approach is realized above all in the second gallery, "Indigenous Perspectives." Here, the first gallery's chronological, *linear* presentation of great contributors to human rights from Hammurabi to Eleanor Roosevelt gives way to an attractive, enclosed circular space that presents Indigenous cosmologies as sources of knowledge, strength and resistance. The film "Circle of Knowledge" features a young woman destined to be part of an emerging new Indigenous leadership that will lead the fight against poverty, hunger, and disease. She accepts the challenge of her elders to create healthy communities by respecting the earth as a living being with which she is directly connected. Moreover, because everything we humans do is interrelated, we all deserve to have our basic human rights respected, the narrator tells us.

Outside this circular space, Rebecca Belmore's clay and steel installation "honours the memory of the original inhabitants of the land upon which this museum stands" (CMHR, "Indigenous Perspectives" wall text, Gallery 2). As we have seen, the issue of land – and especially of land claims – was present as an absence at the very inception of the Museum. Belmore's installation is striking and unquestionably moving, but significantly the CMHR assigns it the task of *commemorating* an "original" presence, thus suggesting the issue has been settled by paying due "honour" to those *in the past* upon whose (unceded) land the museum "stands." The entire issue of land and land claims, exposed by the Museum's original siting decision, is elided.

Following these two galleries, visitors ascend to the next level, where "The Canadian Journey" is presented. One of two films that serve as an introduction to the gallery deals specifically with the issue of Indian Residential Schools. "Childhood Denied: Indian Residential Schools and Their Legacy" foregrounds the painful personal testimony of Simon Hogaluk, who recounts how the IRS' objective of "killing the Indian in the child" was endured in an individual body and psyche. The film teaches that thousands of children died of malnutrition, disease, and abuse of all kinds in residential schools, then pursues the dismal story through the "Sixties Scoop" and the abuses of the child welfare system today. The film features IRS survivors who, as with the young woman in "Circle of Knowledge," are now activists. For them, overcoming the transmission of abuse from one generation to the next is a key task.

Ringing the large hall of Gallery 3 are a series of niches devoted to exploring various aspects of struggles for human rights in Canada. Six of eighteen are devoted either exclusively or substantially to Indigenous issues.[12] In addition, there is a "Tell Your Story" niche where visitors are encouraged to record their own tales of being denied human rights through acts of discrimination, exclusion, and violence. Indigenous stories are among those that viewers can choose to view, including two that discuss sexual violence. In the upper level galleries, a series of interactive displays on categories of human rights includes one on the Rights of Indigenous People, with special attention to the theme of missing and murdered Indigenous women. So, too, does an exhibit on "Human Rights Defenders" include a specific display on Indigenous rights, while an exhibit on Truth and Reconciliation in Canada is included in the "Inspiring Change" gallery, along with several other examples from around the world.[13] The gallery layout of the Museum, then, confirms Phillips's assessment that

> Aboriginal people and their stories will be 'woven in' to other sections of the museum … . [The] broad scope of the museum – universal but with specific connections to Canada – seems to have been conceived in such a way as to occlude rather than bring into relief the special history of Aboriginal human rights histories in Canada or the nation's responsibility to perform redress and reconciliation. (315)

When the editors of *The Idea of a Human Rights Museum* wonder in their Introduction, whether "the museum (will) adequately confront and do justice to the violence and trauma associated with Canada's historical and contemporary treatment of Indigenous peoples?" (12), the answer is obviously not one of yes or no, but instead of how these find themselves inscribed discursively within the overall program of the Museum. In one sense, the decision not to employ the term genocide has consequences for the presentation of Indigenous issues in Canada. For A. Dirk Moses, the omission of the genocide question when speaking of Canada is a form of exceptionalism in the service of a national narrative that the Museum plays its role in constructing: "The museum posits a whiggish narrative of Canadian and global

human rights improvement while simultaneously displacing the genocide question onto other parts of the world." (43).[14] True enough, several Museum exhibits focus on what happens when the power of the state is marshaled to exclude, dehumanize, and ultimately exterminate entire groups or classes of people. The most extensive exhibit on this score is the Holocaust gallery, but there are exhibits that deal with genocides in Armenia, Rwanda, Srebrenica, and the forced starvation of Ukrainians in the Holodomor. All are attributed to ultranationalism, the manipulation of class and ethnic resentments (often by authoritarian regimes seeking to consolidate their power), and ideologies of racial supremacy. For Moses, the specific locus of genocide in the Museum's program is clear: "Anti-racism was promoted over anti-colonialism." (48).

It is true that despite the dozens, perhaps hundreds of cases of human rights abuses referred to in the Museum's exhibits, colonialism is strikingly occluded as a category of human rights abuse, and not just for Indigenous people in Canada.[15] Responsible for the deaths of millions of human beings as they were forcibly traded, enslaved, displaced, and dispossessed, colonialism is barely named as such. I say this not to excuse, but to reinforce Phillips's point about "bring(ing) into relief the special history of Aboriginal human rights histories in Canada or the nation's responsibility to perform redress and reconciliation" (315). In their Afterword to *The Idea of a Human Rights Museum*, the curators explicitly name colonialism as a background condition for the stories integrated throughout the Museum, but the occlusion of colonialism in the Museum's historical representations arguably inhibits its ability to "articulate a decolonizing politics of reconciliation" to which the curators aspire. As historian Jorge Nallim reminds us in his contribution to the volume, representations of the past are social memories, or more precisely the product of specific memories selected for historicization. Even though Nallim specifically addresses the debates that took place in Argentina over how to create a museum dedicated to memorializing the crimes of the military dictatorship, his point takes on a general validity when thinking of the CMHR: "[D]ebates about museums and memorials regarding traumatic events … are inevitably related to particular views of a nation. … The search for truth and justice … [is] intrinsically connected to contemporary political debates in ways that [involve] a particular view of the past." (291).[16]

As the editors of *The Idea of a Human Rights Museum* point out, the CMHR can fairly be regarded "not as a disinterested observer of 'Canada's human rights journey' but rather as one node in the complex network of institutions and practices that gives shape to and reinforces the public's idea of what it means to be Canadian" (9). It is significant, therefore, that what is taken for granted in the CMHR's exhibition strategy is that Indigenous peoples *are* "Canadians," an approach consistent with Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 apology in Parliament to Indigenous people for residential schools. As Dorrell observes,

> in the call for a 'new relationship between aboriginal peoples and *other* Canadians' [my emphasis], it appears that Aboriginal people have been enfranchised on the sly. For members of sovereign First Nations in particular, reconciliation by enfranchisement is wholly contrary to their longstanding demands for state recognition of the unceded sovereignty of First Nations. (36)

Or, as Phillips puts it by referring to the unfulfilled recommendation of the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: "Put simply, reconciliation must empower Aboriginal nations, and this empowerment necessarily involves opening the question of the sanctity of the Canadian state's unilateral assertion of sovereignty." (316).

Finally, the curatorial decision to focus on *personal* stories as "a powerful, engaging, and effective way to present complex human rights issues" and as a way "for people to grapple with abstract concepts such as justice, freedom, equality, and dignity" (Giesbrecht and Curle 323) begs the question of just *how* stories are situated in constructing the encounter the Museum seeks to promote. Citing Hannah Arendt, the curators view storytelling as "a bridge between individuals and communities, allowing people to participate in broader social and political discourses, challenging mainstream narratives, *and fostering mutual recognition and reconciliation*" (332). But the emphasis on mutuality can easily become understood as one of equal and equivalent responsibility. At the risk of repeating the obvious, we are confronted with a situation where loss is unequally distributed and asymmetrically experienced. Even if one party may have lost its soul through its egregious actions toward Indigenous peoples, the other has lost lives and endured attacks on fundamental aspects of its collective existence, so somehow mutuality doesn't seem the most appropriate term. To return to LaCapra's distinctions, trauma here is *historical*, and we do not "share" the wound equally.

In closing, I return to Dorrell's general notion of reconciling as an asymmetrical, open-ended and relational praxis that eschews a "coercive" narrative of resolution and closure, and supplement it with Judith Butler's discussion of relationality and the transformative effects of loss. Both are highly suggestive for specific *non*-Indigenous responses to the TRC Report. In *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004), Butler contends that "despite our differences in location and history, my guess is that it is possible to appeal to a 'we,' for all of us have some notion of what it is to have lost somebody" (20). The point is not to universalize a shared "human condition," but rather to explore the relational and ethical implications of this shared affect. "One mourns when one accepts that by the loss one undergoes one will be changed, perhaps for ever." (21) We also discover that the ties that bind us to others are in fact constitutive of who we are: Who am "I" without you? This relationality, she explains, is not simply one "of you and of me," but one that must be conceived of as the very tie by which these terms are differentiated and put into relationship. As

Butler points out – crucially, for our purposes here – "when we recognize another, or when we ask for recognition for ourselves, we are not asking for an Other to see us as we are, as we already are, as we have always been, as we were constituted prior to the encounter itself. Instead, in the asking, in the petition, we have already become something new … ." (44). Surely this is what is being demanded of non-Indigenous Canadians as a serious response to the TRC Report and, more generally, to movements such as "Idle No More:" Far from reinforcing victimhood, these embody the demand that non-Indigenous Canadians engage an Other *already* transformed. To do so, non-Indigenous Canadians are in turn being called upon to transform themselves by working through their loss of a tenaciously-held national narrative in which colonialism was something *other* nations did and to recognize the truths that are being told. This is what is required in order to "solicit a becoming, to instigate a transformation, to petition the future always in relation to the Other" (44).

This brings me back full circle to where I began, with my seminar's response to the Canadian TRC Report on Indian residential schools. The TRC Report seeks not only "to reveal to Canadians the complex truth about the history and the ongoing legacy of the church-run residential schools" (TRC Report Summary 27) – in other words to identify and fill in an absence by confronting the privilege of an epistemological ignorance engendered by the settler-colonial paradigm –, but also to renew the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities – in other words, to repair a loss, i. e. the loss of the relationship that *might have been* outside of a colonial framework by imagining and working toward one that *could be* in the future. An honest version of Canadian history, the Report insists, is every Canadian child's birthright, but this knowledge must be coupled with an acquired knowledge of Indigenous wisdom, as well as of the past and ongoing contributions of Indigenous culture to the whole of Canada.

The TRC Report and the CMHR have emerged within the broader context of a growing, polyphonic challenge to the Canadian settler-colonial narrative. It is in this context that I have considered how each has treated storytelling and its centrality to the tasks of reconciling. The results are uneven, at once impressive and yet revealing of resistances not easily abandoned. All told, it is the shifting parameters of debate, and the terms on which it is now conducted, that lead me to hazard that finally, some 150, 250, or 500 years later – depending upon when you start counting – and in spite of forceful reasons for caution, we may be approaching a watershed for reimagining and restructuring fundamental relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.

Notes

1 Most of my students were not born until the mid-1990s, and while in theory they may have seen the traveling exhibitions devoted to residential school experience, "Where Are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools" (launched in 2002), or "We Were So Far Away: The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools" (launched in 2009), it is highly unlikely. For a discussion of these exhibitions, see Phillips 309–310.

2 The Introduction to the volume explains: "Over 6,750 people have given recorded statements to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Most of these were given in private settings. Others were given at the national, regional, and community events, sharing circles, and hearings organized by the Commission. These private and public statements form a key part of the Commission's legacy … . This volume is based on a survey of the statements gathered from all parts of the country between 2009 and 2014. Almost all the statements come from individuals who attended schools after 1940." (*The Survivors Speak* 17).

3 The Canadian state's formula for compensating IRS survivors, known as the Common Experience Payment (CEP), is a key element in a governmental concept of reconciliation that foresees and seeks closure. The CEP, comprised of a fixed dollar amount for the first year of residential school and lower, fixed amounts for each additional year, was made to all those who attended an Indian Residential School. This "actuarial" settlement mechanism may well have contributed to the students' skepticism over the value of testimony. Survivors who sought additional compensation as victims of physical and sexual abuse were required to testify in camera through the Independent Assessment Process. Here, an adjudicator assigned points to each case based on the nature and degree of the abuse, with compensation awarded accordingly. Unlike the relatively free-form testimony in TRC public hearings, questions in the IAP honed in on precise details of the acts of abuse, their frequency, and the parts of the body involved. There has been a protracted struggle over the fate of this testimony. The Chief Adjudicator of the IAP has consistently maintained that unless claimants indicate otherwise, respecting the confidentiality of the witnesses requires that all the testimony be destroyed, now that it has served its judicial purpose (http://www.iap-pei.ca/media-room/media-eng.php?act=2016–10-27-eng.php). The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba and the Government of Canada, on the other hand, have sought to acquire the records for their archives. An Ontario Appeals Court judgment upheld the original Superior court decision to provide for a fifteen year period in which claimants are to be contacted and given notice that "with their consent, the IAP applications, transcripts or audio recordings of their evidence and the adjudicator's decisions could be archived at the NCTR, provided personal information about alleged perpetrators or affected parties was redacted" (Par. 236, http://www.ontariocourts.ca/decisions/2016/2016ONCA0241.htm). The Appeals decision also modified the earlier decision by ruling that it is the Chief Adjudicator, not the NCTR, who is to conduct the notice program. The decision was appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada in May 2017. On October 6, 2017 the seven justices hearing the case rendered a unanimous judgment upholding the decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal, noting that "the supervising judge's findings that the negotiators of the IRSSA intended the IAP to be a confidential and private process, that claimants and perpetrators relied

on the confidentiality assurances and that, without such assurances, the IAP could not have functioned were inescapable," and that granting the substance of the appeal "would clearly run counter to the principles of confidentiality and voluntariness upon which the IAP was founded" (2017 SCC 47). Ultimately, the justices regard the Ontario decision to provide for a fifteen-year period in which to seek the consent of witnesses as a reasonable compromise and a "lesser injustice." For them, the original order, "as modified by the Court of Appeal, strikes a balance between preserving confidentiality and the need to memorialize and commemorate, all the while respecting the choice of survivors to share their stories, and charts an appropriate course between potentially unwanted destruction and potentially injurious preservation … While this order may be inconsistent with the wishes of deceased claimants who were never given the option to preserve their records, the destruction of records that some claimants would have preferred to have preserved works a lesser injustice than the disclosure of records that most expected never to be shared." (2017 SCC 47) The justices also upheld that it would be the Chief Adjudicator, and not the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation as appelants had wanted, who would be responsible for administering the process : "During the 15-year retention period, claimants may choose to have their IAP Documents preserved and archived, and that choice will be brought to their attention through a notice program administered by the Chief Adjudicator." (2017 SCC 47).

4 Cuban Association of Canadian Studies Conference, Guardalavaca, April 2016.

5 The TRC Commission insists upon this in speaking of the pre-conditions for any effective process of reconciliation: "By *truth*, we mean not only the truth revealed in government and church residential school documents, but also the truth of lived experiences as told to us by Survivors and others in their statements to this Commission." (TRC Report Summary 12).

6 Though much celebrated since opening in September 2014, the Museum has had to navigate troubled waters since its inception, in particular around the development of the permanent exhibition. The question of *who* would be represented and to what degree occasioned considerable acrimony. A thorough discussion of this question is beyond the scope of this essay but is abundantly treated in Busby's, Muller's, and Woolford's volume and elsewhere.

7 "Section 16 of the Museums Act, the federal legislation responsible for specifying the terms and limits of the CMHR's legal existence [states] that the museum exists to enhance the public's understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others and to encourage reflection and dialogue." (Busby, Muller and Woolford 16)

8 "… CMHR curators have done their best to avoid the language of commemoration, and indeed the word has been assiduously avoided in the museum's press releases and other public pronouncements." (Busby, Muller and Woolford 17)

9 "An Ongoing Dialogue," CMHR wall text, Gallery 1.

10 According to my count, 14 of 52 of the images of contributors to human rights are of women. However, from the beginning of the exhibition to the beginning of the 19th century, only three are women. For the 19th and 20th centuries, 11 of 33 are women.

11 The attempt to provide a modicum of coherence to often conflicting views produces some very curious results. On the timeline, for example, we learn that Hegel, celebrant of the world historical spirit and its embodiment in the state, "believed social structures

are needed for individual rights" while Marx merely "opposed capitalist exploitation of workers." In the audiovisual presentation, the formation of trade unions is defended … by an entrepreneur who credits their role in collaborating with owners for the sake of an enterprise's success!

12 (1) Aboriginals: Right to Safety and Justice, (2) Voting Rights: Banning Groups from the Ballot, (3) Language Rights, (4) Childhood Denied: Residential Schools, (5) Inuit Rights in the North, and (6) Asserting Métis Rights.

13 Grandmothers in Solidarity (Africa, AIDS, and the Stephen Lewis Foundation), Prom Night in Georgia (racial integration), Egyptian Graffiti Art (Tahrir Square), Right to Assembly (Quebec's "Maple Spring"), Workers' Rights (Brazil), Struggle against Apartheid, and Empowering War-affected Children.

14 It was not only the issue of genocide that came in for this treatment. As David Petrasek observed during the months leading up to the Museum's opening, "Press reports suggest that the curatorial staff have been urged to focus on 'good news,' and planned presentations on how poverty in present-day Canada might raise human rights concerns were reportedly shelved because of such pressure, allegedly from the CMHR board." (88). And more generally, as Nallim states, "in the middle of conflicts regarding funding and staffing of the museum, articles in the local press called attention to alleged internal debates between managers and current and former employees about whether the museum should be centred on 'darker' narratives about genocide or if it should emphasize more 'positive' stories" (280).

15 Perhaps the best example is "Breaking the Silence," the Museum exhibit devoted to selected mass violations of human rights throughout the world. Colonialism *per se is* nowhere to be found as a human rights violation in this exhibit. Here, the presentations all follow an identical template: first the build-up to a mass violation of human rights; then, a description of the violation itself, followed by the denial or effacement of this violation by official memory, followed in turn by a breaking of the silence through the actions of courageous individuals.

16 Nallim was asked to write the text for the CMHR exhibit on the period of military dictatorship in Argentina, and the story, as told by him to my seminar, was an instructive one. Nallim had objected to using the term "Dirty War" as the title for the exhibition because it was the attribution invented and used by the dictatorship and the complicit media of the time. He was told that since this was the name under which the average person had heard about the situation, it was the one that ought to be used. He was told that in presenting "Argentina's Dirty War," the text, like all others in the Museum, should target an audience of students in their first year of secondary education. The issue became whether the museum's job, in the name of accessibility, was to confirm, or reframe, the received accounts of the violence of the period. This was doubly important, since the case was far from closed: despite the general amnesties that were declared in the initial transition from military to civilian rule, Nallim explained that under the Kirchner governments many cases were in fact re-opened, and not just of military men, but also of the CEOs of companies that collaborated with them. Eventually, the term "Dirty War" was dropped.

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Digitizing Trauma

Embodying Empathy in a Reconstructed Canadian Indian Residential School

Adam Muller, Struan Sinclair and Andrew Woolford

This article discusses the aims and methods of the *Embodying Empathy* project (*EE*), a Canadian multidisciplinary public-private research and creative partnership that is working, with funding from the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada* and under the direction of Indigenous Survivors, to produce a digitally immersive experience centering on a representation of Canada's Indian Residential School (IRS) system. *EE* is a complicated and in different ways challenging undertaking that has several aims, one of the more significant of which is to address fundamental questions posed by recent developments in curatorial and commemorative practice, most especially those arising from the so-called "experiential turn" in heritage thinking and design. As exemplified by museums such as Washington, D.C.'s Newseum and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR), which opened in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 2014,[1] this experiential turn designates curatorial strategies aiming to produce enriching interactions between museum contents and museum goers rather than occasions for quiet reflection, aesthetic appreciation, or education (per se). Increasingly, museums are relying upon sophisticated digital technologies to facilitate and sustain these interactions, and part of what *EE* is being designed to assist with is determining whether or not some fairly major curatorial assumptions – such as that virtual experiences, through the feelings they elicit, contribute to durably altering people's moral or political dispositions – hold any water at all.

EE is also, however, being created to serve as a model of living and decolonized heritage practice. The project's ownership, outcomes, and uses have been only minimally determined by its academic directors (the three authors), and we hope through this way of organizing and structuring both the project and the interactions required to advance it to perform a particular way of thinking about what it means to work with, and on, Indigenous experiences. Indeed through our work on *EE* we are attempting to model a highly robust form of "non-extractive" scholarship that departs significantly in its fundamental orientation towards its objects from prior ways of working with and on Indigenous peoples and cultures. We concur with Indigenous education professor Margaret Kovach, who in an article on the importance of conversation to Indigenous research observes that truly decolonized research on Indigenous peoples must adhere to

> specific ethical guidelines that include, but are not limited to, a mutually respectful research relationship; that the research benefit the community; that appropriate permission and informed consent is sought; that the research is non-exploitive and non-extractive; and that there is respect for community ethics and protocol. (46)

Although something like these guidelines have gradually become *de rigueur* in the ethics protocols required for receipt of funding from most major Canadian granting agencies, as well as to obtain smaller pots of money made available by individual Canadian universities seeking to "indigenize" their research portfolios, *EE* has in several significant respects exceeded these specifications in pursuit of a new conception of what "best practice" means when working with Indigenous history and the traumatic legacies of settler-colonial (i. e. genocidal) violence.

In what follows we will be providing an account of the *Embodying Empathy* project, which has its origins in two prominent (and interlinked) moments in recent Canadian history: (1) the federal government's decision to build a new national human rights museum in Winnipeg, the capital city of a prairie province with a lengthy history of mistreating and neglecting Indigenous Canadians; and (2) the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) as a consequence of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA), which aimed to acknowledge the harms that were done by residential schools and to compensate the many victims of these institutions.[2] We will distinguish between *EE*'s research and reconciliatory functions, and explain its significance with respect to each. The project aims not just to resolve longstanding questions in the critical literature regarding the moral efficacy of immersivity in the digital domain, but to function as a stand-alone museum-quality installation intended to provide those who experience it with a morally robust introduction to the perspectives of Indigenous children forced to live sometimes for many years[3] in educational facilities within which they were often cruelly mistreated, and that friends and family were for the most part unable to visit. In this way *EE* is at one and the same time an *explanandum* and an *explanans* in the sense of these terms as elaborated in C.G. Hempel's and Paul Oppenheim's deductive-nomological model of scientific explanation.[4] That is to say, *EE* can be viewed as at one and the same time an attempt to evoke an Indigenous experience of Canada's IRS, and a "thick" attempt to theorize that evocation (see Hempel and Oppenheim 152).

Contexts and Ambitions

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights was created in 2008 when Parliament passed Bill C-42 and amended the Museums Act to give the CMHR its legal identity, thus establishing its purpose along with its governance structure, and also authorizing its construction outside of the national-capital region.[5] However, as Australian

historian Dirk Moses has shown, the museum's conceptual point of origin and early development may be traced well back into the early 1990s (see Moses 238), when ideas first began circulating about the possibility of creating a Canadian Holocaust museum, the country's first. Faced with federal resistance to such an initiative, Winnipeg communications magnate and philanthropist Israel (Izzy) Asper, one of the driving force behind the Holocaust museum idea, worked out a deal with the federal government to create instead a national human rights museum to be located in his hometown. Crucially, as a nod to its conceptual origins it was decided early on that the museum would dedicate one of its ten "core" galleries to representing human rights violations that occurred during the Holocaust.

Once it became generally known, however, the decision by the CMHR to reserve one of its galleries entirely for the Holocaust set off a series of very public skirmishes between members of Canada's Jewish and Ukrainian communities (and their allies). The two groups were old antagonists, having earlier clashed over whether or not to prosecute post-World War II nationalist immigrants to Canada as war criminals for atrocities perpetrated against Ukrainian Jews and others following the Nazi invasion of 1941. Some Ukrainian Canadians viewed the CMHR as privileging Jewish suffering above the suffering of other groups, and bemoaned curators' neglect (bordering, they felt, on dismissal) of the agonies of those Ukrainians who experienced Soviet state-sponsored famines in the 1920s and 1930s, most notably the Holodomor of 1932–1933 during which three and a half million people died (cf. Himka). It was argued that these victims had their human rights no less violated than those of the Nazis' victims, and so they were no less worthy of commemoration and defense. The ensuing "Oppression Olympics" (cf. Hankivsky and Kaur Dhamoon) or "ethnic war in miniature" (Kay) inaugurated by individuals anxious to protect and assert the "sacredness" of their respective historical traumas has been widely discussed elsewhere. It is, however, worth noting in passing that this contest seldom edified anyone or did anything to reassure a public still unclear on why a new museum was being built at vast expense in a location that one critic considered only attractive to "international visitors … more interested in hunting, fishing and other outdoor pursuits than dragging their children to 'interactive' museum exhibits about the Chinese Massacre of 1871 or Canada's own Charter of Rights and Freedoms" (Kay). Most unfortunately, the Holocaust/Holodomor debate failed in any way to do justice to perhaps the most intellectually substantial worry shared by partisans from both camps, namely that the CMHR lacked the means to represent adequately the moral enormity of their communities' respective traumas.

It was this representational worry that immediately attracted the three of us, mainly because of attempts in our prior work to address related questions arising from the intersection of digital culture, public memory, and settler-colonial genocide. Anxious to avoid intervening in a sterile and sometimes offensive debate, we turned our attention instead to "Indigenous Perspectives," the other of the CMHR's

two permanent galleries. Partisans in the Holocaust/Holodomor debate, as well as those engaged in smaller disputes over the inclusion or not in the museum of such human rights case studies as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory (the answer in this case continues to be "not"), seemed generally accepting of the need for a distinct Indigenous-themed gallery in the CMHR, and so there was much less said and written about it in the lead-up to the museum's opening. Nevertheless, and particularly in light of the rapidly changing political landscape in Canada in the early 2000s in so far as Indigenous issues are concerned, it seemed clear to us that much more attention needed to be paid not just to what the CMHR was going to need to say about the violation of Indigenous peoples' rights in Canada, but about how Indigenous stories and experiences would be curated and told in a so-called "ideas museum," an institution curatorially dependent not on artifacts and objects, but on experientially-driven digital technologies.

Our interest in these issues increased in response to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), which was launched in 2008 as a primary consequence of the 2007 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement reached between the federal government and Indigenous Survivors of abuse in Canada's IRS. In addition to providing financial compensation for their suffering, as well as for each year spent within a residential school, the IRSSA specified that IRS Survivors would receive extra health and welfare benefits that were intended to address some of the enduring social and physical damage done by residential schooling. It also mandated the creation of the TRC. From 2008 until the delivery of its final report in 2015, the TRC gathered more than 6200 Survivor statements detailing the harms done by the Canadian government working with Christian churches to assimilate the country's Indigenous population, in effect by attempting to "kill the Indian in the child" (see *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* 137, and Woolford).[6] More than 150,000 students attended Canada's IRS from the time they were established in the 1880s until the last school closed in 1996. While at these schools, students were subjected to extraordinary levels of physical and psychological abuse, including extreme forms of corporal punishment and rape. The schools did enormous damage not just to the integrity of Indigenous cultures but to Indigenous health outcomes and the ability of Indigenous children, forcibly estranged from their families, to parent their own children in their turn. So pernicious were the violent effects of the IRS, and so enduring their harms not just to Indigenous cultures but to Canadian life more generally (the TRC concluded, and most Canadians accept, that the IRS were complicit in "cultural genocide"), that on June 11, 2008, shortly after the implementation of the IRSSA, Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered an apology on behalf of all Canadians for what he described as "a sad chapter in our history" that revolved around a "policy of assimilation [that was] wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country" (Harper).[7] What place, the three of us wondered as we reflected on the moral and political

significance of the apology, would this "sad chapter" have in the CMHR? Given the complexity, duration, and scale of the violence perpetrated by residential schools, what hope did the museum (or indeed any other agency) have of adequately representing such deep trauma and suffering?

By way of addressing these questions we began to explore some of the new options emerging in the digital domain for representing what Debra Britzmann has famously termed "difficult knowledge" (see Britzman 1998 and 2003). Examples of the kinds of technologies and innovations that interested us abound, and include (but aren't limited to) the work of USC professor and virtual reality (VR) pioneer Nonny de la Peña, whose 2012 immersive project "Hunger in Los Angeles" placed wearers of a VR headset into the shoes of a member of an L.A. crowd witnessing a man waiting in line at a food bank collapsing on the street and falling into a diabetic coma. "Hunger in Los Angeles" paved the way for even more "immersive journalism" created by de la Peña and others inspired by the idea that digitally created immersive experiences can move those undergoing them into a richer appreciation of others' suffering. Video footage documenting individual experiences of de la Peña's 2014 followup project "Project Syria" – which immerses users in the lived experience of a missile attack on an Aleppo market – shows users weeping and otherwise breaking down emotionally in response to what they have just seen and heard. In an interview with de la Peña for the tech magazine *Wired*, Caleb Garling attempts to explain the moral utility of such phenomenologically rich immersivity as follows: "If viewers can 'feel' the power of gunfire overhead in Syria and 'stand' shoulder to shoulder with grieving Syrians in the aftermath, they'll understand these tragedies from the inside, not as just another headline." (n. p.).

Inspiring *Embodying Empathy* then was a series of factors linked to significant developments occurring in three distinct but overlapping fields: (1) the decision to create the CMHR in Winnipeg raised pressing questions about the museum's choices of which Indigenous content to include in its Indigenous Perspectives gallery, as well as questions about how, as an ideas museum, this content would be displayed and interacted with; (2) the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada served to reveal not just the scale of the atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples in what is now Canada but also their variety and enduring harms; and (3) the emergence of virtual reality as an area of dynamic digital innovation and experimentation provided a new toolbox for technologists, curators, victims, and activists interested in representing traumatic experiences in order to enhance users' capacity to identify with (and make more robust their disposition to palliate) others' pain. Working from the assumption that the TRC's uncovering of the genocidal character of Canada's IRS system would be required content for any national human rights museum, and marshalling newly available lightweight and (relatively) inexpensive VR and interactive technologies, we have created *EE* in an attempt to imagine what a museum-quality immersive digital representation of an

IRS might look like. Specifically, we are using *EE*'s virtual "storyworld" to determine more precisely whether or not users' immersive experiences of such environments enhance their empathetic capabilities. And we are working with and for the project's Indigenous partners to create an installation capable of performing reconciliatory work by bringing the harsh realities of Canada's IRS to light for Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences alike.

The Project

Embodying Empathy required a series of meetings before the virtual world could be conceptualized. Our first step was to form a Survivor Governing Council (SGC). Theodore Fontaine, a Survivor of two residential schools (Fort Alexander and Assiniboia), who has written a memoir about his experiences, (see Fontaine) assisted us in this task. We had already formed a relationship with him through our previous work, and knew he was further along in his healing journey than many Survivors. He arranged an initial meeting with a group of Survivors prior to our grant application that helped us frame the project. However, our project truly took shape after the grant was in place and we were able to arrange a series of meetings to address its finer details.

From the outset, it was our objective to implement a participant-driven, unsettling methodology. This was informed by the OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) principles developed by the Assembly of First Nations, which specify that research concerning Indigenous peoples should not simply extract Indigenous knowledges for non-Indigenous use, but rather should provide Indigenous research participants ownership of and control over the methods and goals of the research, access to the findings, and possession of the final research product. These principles, originally established to guide health researchers, demand that researchers understand Indigenous people and communities as collaborators rather than research objects.

On this basis, our initial meetings were intended to discuss the research methodology so that the Survivor Governing Council could determine the scope and terms of reference for *EE*'s research and creative processes. However, this was not what transpired. Instead, we first had to build trust with the group, and more particularly to address pointed questions, such as: "Why are you doing this research?"; "Why you and not somebody else?"; and "How will you benefit from this knowledge?". Each of the Governing Council members had experienced non-Indigenous Canadians' reluctance to acknowledge the harms of residential schools, in addition to the violence they faced from non-Indigenous Canadians while attending these schools. Their challenges required us to prove ourselves earnest in achieving our goals and working in a decolonized way. Moreover, their questions were crucial to enhancing our un-

settling methodology and they led us to examine all aspects of our proposed project, and not solely its methodology, through a decolonizing lens. Doing so obliged us to redesign our consent form so that its language could be approved by the Governing Council. It also meant submitting multiple revisions to our university's research ethics board in order to implement the changes recommended by the Council.

Once discussion about the content and design of the vIRS began, we were each transformed through the resulting interactions with our Survivor partners. Meetings became defined more by the strengthening of relationships, emerging friendships, and active listening, as well as by growing mutual concerns. The stories entrusted to us to help give form to *EE*'s vIRS storyworld were often devastating. At times, we tried to direct Council members' attention to specific details of the emerging build: sounds, moods, textures, lighting, windows, doors, and passageways, to name a few. At other times we were taken in unexpected directions. For example, the playroom of the vIRS, which was a space the children would congregate at various times such as before brief visits with their parents, proved to be stronger in Survivors' memories than other spaces prominent in the public's imagination of residential schools – classrooms and dormitories, in particular. Indeed, little of the main action comprising their various stories took place in classrooms, making these spaces a less central feature of the resulting storyworld. In addition, other spaces emerged as ones of terror and trauma. Over the course of our discussions the school's furnace room also loomed large in Survivors' memories as a dark and dangerous space, and even the girls' washroom became marked as a location of psychological abuse, such as when paper was taped over all of the mirrors for nearly a year so as to prevent the girls from looking at themselves.

These recollections were not delivered in a detailed or linear fashion, meaning that we needed to try to incorporate them into *EE*'s vIRS in a manner respectful of the discontinuities and disjunctures in the Survivors' experiences. Early versions of the build were therefore brought back to the Survivors for their comments, revised, and brought back for their feedback once again. The initial builds, which we often found powerful in their ability to elicit our feelings because of what we had heard, met with criticism from the Survivor Governing Council. Room sizes were too small, we were told, lighting was not quite right, and stairs and hallways were not in their proper location. Even spaces created with close reference to "official" school blueprints proved inaccurate when compared with Survivors' memories. A first-hand tour of the former site of the Fort Alexander Indian Residential School, as well as a visit to the adjacent cemetery in Sagkeeng, where we saw two statues that had previously been located in front of the residential school, helped enhance our visualization and improve the accuracy of the build.

What began as an effort to implement a participatory design process so as to decolonize our digital design and build procedures soon became something more – a participant-led approach to knowledge gathering. Typically participatory design

methodologies, which are fairly ubiquitous in the domains of computer science, digital design, and engineering, require users' participation in the design and introduction of computer-based systems and benefit researchers concerned "with a more human, creative, and effective relationship between those involved in technology's design and its use, and in that way between technology and the human activities that provide technological systems with their reason for being" (Suchman vii). In contrast, the participant-led research in which we engaged went beyond encouraging mere participation and placed the control of the project squarely in the Survivor Governing Council's hands, in the process transforming us three authors (and academics) into facilitators of knowledge sharing rather than researchers per se. Even so, there are a number of research questions that *EE* is intended to address, and we will briefly discuss them in the following section.

Innovations and Challenges

The *EE* storyworld design is animated by two central research questions: (1) can immersive technology, carefully-designed and implemented, do more than static exhibits to enhance empathetic engagement[8] with experiences of atrocity; and (2) can such engagements influence subsequent education in a manner that educates, transforms people, and encourages and sustains decolonizing practices? With these questions in mind, we are working with our partners towards developing a storyworld that is immersive, interactive and contributes to meaningful engagement with a diversity of IRS experiences, incorporating a flexible approach to technology such that the final product is accessible across a variety of hardware and software platforms while allowing for future updates and expansion (such as, for example, additional layers and modules based on particular historical IRS sites).[9]

Reconstructing a complex site of trauma within a VE (virtual environment) to be navigated by Survivors and by a diverse set of visitors with varying degrees of exposure to and understanding of the IRS system presents difficult challenges. First, there are abiding concerns about the suitability of any VE to educate users on the history and legacy of the IRS system without coopting, abridging or denaturing Survivors' lived experiences. In other words, how can the depth of experience – sensory, psychosocial, emotional and other – felt by an IRS Survivor be adequately captured and conveyed within a virtual environment? How can a technological platform more usually associated with gaming or simulations be adapted to the rigours of telling the stories of the IRS system? How can the needs of different user bases (Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, non-native users) be variously met by one storyworld?

Then there are problems of selection. Which historical IRS periods and spaces should be used to form the basis for the *EE* storyworld? How can the very different experiences of Survivors be aggregated or summed within the storyworld? Should

representations aim for historical accuracy or experiential verisimilitude? Do participants enter the storyworld as prospective IRS students? As spectators? As perpetrators? And what experiences are to be understood as essential, peripheral or out of bounds within the vIRS?

There are also issues of technical feasibility. In order to ensure that *EE* be made as accessible as humanly possible, the storyworld must be platform-agnostic, be lean in its resource requirements, and be amenable to future updates. To this end, *EE* has been from the beginning a parallel design, with versions that can be optimized for semi-permanent installation as well as portable use.

Early builds followed an evolving brief that emphasized a diversity of experiences and approaches, included links to historical narratives and materials, and was attentive to both personal and wider cultural dimensions of IRS experiences. Our initial round of consultations with Survivors led to the inclusion of specific and detailed representations of interior and exterior spaces, soundscapes, activities, and relationships. Throughout the design process there has been a clearly expressed desire by Survivors and intergenerational Survivors – another important user and informant group whose interests and perspectives have shaped *EE*'s design process – to represent IRS experiences non-euphemistically and to build in spaces for further education and conversation so as to facilitate information transmission and, by extension, reconciliation. This feedback has helped to produce, in prototype, a multi-layered storyworld that locates aspects of IRS experiences within personal narratives that themselves connect, via hyperlink, to larger archival resources, from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and related IRS heritage sites to more specialized IRS projects like those ongoing at Carleton University's Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre.

Once inside the virtual environment, users are able to interact dynamically with a range of spaces, objects, and embedded narratives throughout the storyworld, using in-world navigation techniques that are integrated with the body in order to maximize the transparency of the user interface and help incorporate user feedback directly into the environment. Physical pathways are, equally, narrative pathways so that participants sample the embodied experiences of Survivors, following their footsteps through *EE*'s corridors, playroom, chapel, classroom, dormitory and other spaces while being encouraged at intervals to reflect on their own embeddedness within the discourses and legacies surrounding and emerging from the IRS system. The storyworld uses empathy as a means of fostering the recognition of Survivor experiences and, we hope, will prove conducive to the sorts of reconciliatory activities recommended by the project's Survivor Governing Council and Canada's TRC.[10]

In designing and populating the *EE* storyworld we have worked from the premise, increasingly accepted within the domains of computer science, engineering, and experimental psychology, that virtual environments can themselves function as embodied experiences and not merely degraded approximations of them.[11] The

final phase of *EE* study, to be undertaken from 2017–2018, will evaluate the degree to which participants manifest an empathetic response to the storyworld, including rich data concerning the specifics of these responses. Questions remain to be resolved, however, including: How should visitors navigate the storyworld? How immersive or "real" can we afford to be? Do we want to recreate the most corrosive aspects of an experience of atrocity? How persistent and/or durable are the empathetic connections (if any) forged within the *EE* storyworld? And what blend of technologies, both traditional and new, can best fulfill the project's present goals of representation, dissemination, archiving, education and reconciliation?

Ongoing consultations, subsequent builds, and detailed feedback obtained following the evaluation phase of *EE*[12] will help to clarify, if not finally resolve, some of these pressing questions. In the mean time, the virtual structures comprising *EE*'s storyworld can serve to provide one more venue for the transmission of knowledge about the difficult, often still unspoken, and generally not well understood Indigenous experience of the IRS system in Canada.

Conclusion

The ninety-four Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada as part of its final report on Canada's IRS system seek explicitly "to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation." Although these calls cover a lot of contested ground, and involve issues ranging from judicial and social policy reform to heath care outcomes,

Taken together they stress the necessity of non-Indigenous Canadians becoming more aware of Indigenous history and experiences of life under settler rule. A key feature of this experience was the Indian Residential School system, which along with the so-called Sixties Scoop did so much to disrupt traditional patterns of Indigenous life, to devastating effect. Getting Canadians and others to acknowledge the force and long-lasting effects of this disruption remains one of the signal challenges facing all those advocating for reconciliation and redress.

Embodying Empathy was created to explore the possibilities inherent in new technologies and related modes of representation to educate Canadians – including IRS Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, and those with little understanding of Canada's history of settler-colonial violence – about the role played by IRS in destroying Indigenous group life. These technologies are fast becoming ubiquitous in museums and heritage sites, where it is assumed they will allow for new and more meaningful forms of engagement with traumatic histories and memories. In locations such as the CMHR, these technologies are thought to facilitate the kind of interactions resulting in empathetic unsettlement of the sort required to get users to think anew about how to act to make reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous

peoples a reality, and not just a moral and political fantasy. Through its decentered, interactive, and broadly participatory design and creation methodologies *EE* has tried to model reconciliatory praxis, and in the process sought to demonstrate the virtues of non-extractive Indigenous/non-Indigenous co-creation and research. Whether or not the project's final product (i. e. the *EE* storyworld) is capable of producing lasting and worthwhile transformations in those who experience it has yet to be determined. Over the next year or so, we will be undertaking the empirical assessments required to know whether or not more immersivity in others' suffering generates more empathy for sufferers, and whether or not more empathy makes meaningful attempts at reconciliation and redress more likely to occur and to "stick." As it stands, however, and notwithstanding our best efforts to date, we don't know what the results of users' experiences of *EE* will be. We hope that by immersing users in our storyworld we will be able to make them appreciate more fully the profound stresses and losses characteristic of the Indigenous experience of Canada's IRS; and, by doing so, to narrow the moral, social, and historical distance between victims and secondary witnesses to settler-colonial genocide in Canada, in the process providing additional reasons for all concerned to work to ensure that even more be done to redress this genocide's ongoing deleterious effects.

Notes

1 Significantly, both museums were designed by the firm Ralph Applebaum Associates, which also designed the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, perhaps the "gold standard" in atrocity museums.
2 The IRSSA made provision for a compensation fund totaling two billion Canadian dollars, the largest such class action settlement in Canadian history.
3 Students deemed "orphans" could experience uninterrupted residence in IRS for up to 10–12 years.
4 "By the *explanandum*, we understand the sentence describing the phenomenon to be explained (not that phenomenon itself); by the *explanans*, the class of those sentences which are adduced to account for the phenomenon."
5 The CMHR is the first Canadian national museum not to have been constructed in or around Ottawa.
6 The original version of this much-cited phrase is attributed by the TRC to American Lieutenant Richard Pratt, the founder and superintendent of the Carlisle Indian Boarding School in Pennsylvania.
7 In point of fact, Harper was required to give the apology, as an act of good faith, to convince the Indigenous parties to the IRSSA to sign on. The apology was not officially part of the IRSSA, but its promise was necessary in order to get the deal done.
8 Our working model of empathy is guided by Dan Zahavi's intuition that empathy, "rather than being some mysterious form of telepathy, simply amounts to an experience of the embodied mind of the other, i. e., simply refers to our ability to access the life of the

mind of others in their bodily and behavioral expressions" (522). For Zahavi, therefore, empathy is "an ability that moreover can improve with familiarity, learning, and salience" (522). Scott McGuiggan glosses empathy as an awareness of another's affective state that generates emotions in the empathizer that reflect more than her/his own situation, and further distinguishes between "parallel empathy," the mere replication of another's affective state, and "reactive empathy" (n. p.), which requires greater cognitive awareness and may lead to incongruent emotional responses.

9 One possibility is to add additional virtual IRS venues in consultation with our project partners and Survivor organizations within Canada and beyond.

10 See the Calls to Action listed in the TRC's *Final Report*.

11 For differing but compatible arguments for these claims, see Slater; Bickmore, Schulman and Yin; Young and Whitty 2010 and 2011.

12 This empirical evaluation will be undertaken by an *EE* project task group headed by University of Manitoba social psychologist and empathy specialist Katherine Starzyk and her team.

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Part VI
Commemoration

A Tribute to Jo-Ann Episkenew

Hartmut Lutz

Remembering Jo-Ann Episkenew

Renowned Métis scholar Jo-Ann Episkenew (née Thom) passed away on February 18, 2016 at the age of 63. She had accepted an invitation by the Trier Centre for Canadian Studies to give a conference paper on "Letting Go of Trauma: Indigenous People and Brainwave Neurofeedback." I am grateful to the conference organizer, Wolfgang Klooss, who suggested that we spend time to celebrate Dr. Episkenew's life and to remember her achievements. I can in no way at all be a substitute for her expertise in the field. All I can do is to try to share with you some of my memories of her, and attempt to introduce you to her deep understanding of colonial trauma.

Jo-Ann loved people and communication. She avoided the academic lingo meant to signal suave sophistication and intim(id)ating learnedness to the outside world, and she used a language which people could understand, full of wit, unflinchingly direct, empathetic and backed by a wisdom that grew out of a challenging life lived outside the ivory tower. The best word to describe her language in speech and in writing is "lucid."

A few years ago, for a book on Native responses to German Indianthusiasm, I interviewed Jo-Ann in her office at the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Center at the University of Regina. My first standardized question was about her "tribal affiliation." She giggled and responded as follows:

> My tribe? I'm member of many tribes.
> I'm the tribe of educated Native women with PhDs. I'm the tribe of mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers. I'm also the tribe of the Métis Nation of Manitoba, now transplanted to Saskatchewan. I'm the tribe of trashy paranormal romance readers. And I could go on and on. (Lutz 2012)

She then retorted: "Did you ask Germans what their tribal affiliation is?". Jo-Ann possessed an unbound(ed) love for literature, both "high brow" and "trash," and an immense acumen of literary, cultural and social knowledge. As her "Doktorvater" I feel blessed, humbled, grateful and proud to have had the privilege of working with her.

A Halfbreed Student in Academia

Jo-Ann was my teaching assistant at the English Department of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) in 1990–1991. At 38 she was then a widowed mother of four children, who had begun her university studies a few years earlier. On entering academia Jo-Ann Thom suffered a severe postcolonial culture shock, which she recorded in her thesis, and which has often been quoted since:

> In my second year as an undergraduate student, I had an epiphany. I realized that all knowledge worth knowing – or more specifically, knowledge that my university considered worth teaching – was created by Greeks, appropriated by the Romans, disseminated throughout western Europe, and through colonialism made its way to the rest of the people of the world, who apparently were sitting on their thumbs waiting for enlightenment. (2009: 1)

This epistemological culture shock only tells one side of her experience, the other was more physical – racist and sexist. Here is a poem she wrote then, dedicated to Cree poet and fellow academic Beth Cuthand:

> "Half-breed Lost in Academia"
> (For Beth Cuthand)
>
> Until I entered this academic world
> (Their world)
> I never really heard
> people use
> the "B" word
> (brilliant that is).
> And I thought
> for a while
> "I wouldn't mind if
> someone called me that."
> But I was wrong.
> For you see
> it's just another way of dividing us up
> into manageable pieces –
> of denying our whole selves.
> "She's brilliant, you know,
> that Native woman.
> The pretty one
> with the big tits,
> nice legs,
> flat ass,
> brilliant mind."
> And there we are again –

fragments of a person.
For problems
are always easier
to dispose of
If you
    break them
into
    small
        pieces. (1993: 174)

A Transatlantic PhD-Candidate

Jo-Ann's decision to pursue a "Dr. phil." in Germany was a choice partly of scholarly preference and partly of expedience, because our PhD-system is based almost entirely on research, and – except for occasional colloquia – not contingent on course work requiring physical presence.[1] As her thesis advisor I was impressed with her independent critical thinking, her resilience and political toughness and her dogged persistence. Jo-Ann managed to break the isolation of her situation as a transatlantic long-distance PhD-candidate by communicating and networking with "friends, mentors, and role models" like Sherry Farrell Racette, Linda Goulet, Kristina Fagan and Deanna Reder, as well as with her "Doktorschwestern" in Canada, Jeannette Armstrong and the late Renate Eigenbrod.

Jo-Ann was very conscious of her unique position as a role model, and her obligations to her home community. Even before working on her doctorate, she was active in supporting and disseminating Aboriginal literature. In 1999 she co-founded with Renate Eigenbrod the "Aboriginal Roundtable" of CACLALS (*Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies*), and in 2002 they co-published the proceedings (Eigenbrod and Episkenew).

This joint initiative eventually led to the foundation of ILSA, the *Indigenous Literary Studies Association* in Vancouver in October 2013. When Renate suddenly passed away in May 2014, Jo-Ann wrote an obituary for her friend, in which she stated, that she had mentally "Indigenized" her experiences of being a PhD-student in the German system, by using it to "make relationships:"

> In the old German custom, one's Ph.D. supervisor was called the "doktorvater" (doctor father). Hartmut Lutz told me that the German students don't accept the term any more since it smacks of patriarchy. I chose to interpret it a different way, however, to Indigenize it, if you will – to make relationships. I love the fact that Hartmut will always be "mein doktorvater" (doctor father), and I his "doktorkind" (doctor child). And I will always remember Renate as my dear "doktorschwester" (doctor sister) and my friend. I am grateful to have known her. (Personal email 1)

An Expert On Healing Trauma Through Literature

In her doctoral thesis Jo-Ann Episkenew investigates the complex question whether, and how, contemporary Indigenous literature in Canada may serve the cathartic healing function traditionally entailed in Indigenous oral storytelling. She first explores the ideological impact of colonial founding myths that lie at the heart of perceiving Canada as a Settler society based on White supremacy. She shows how the effects of colonization were explained as the results of Indigenous physical and mental deficiencies rather than as the products of European aggressive strategies. The Settlers' guilt-free conscience was based on distortions, omissions and denials, and even today's "cultural awareness training" still sidesteps the issue of systemic racism. Jo-Ann reads White privilege as "a socio-cultural health determinant for the Indigenous population" (2009: 7), and she shows that colonial policies have so profoundly damaged Indigenous peoples' "mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and social health" (10) that today there is a collective intergenerational Postcolonial Traumatic Stress Response (PTSR), resulting in multiple forms of inverted violence. But increasingly, she claims, Indigenous people have found in "their own communities … [the] … resources with which to heal traumatized sprits", thus (re-)discovering "the healing power of stories as they have begun to reassert their individual and collective narratives" (13).

In her book Jo-Ann minces no words. She refers to the Canadian government's Indian policy as a "regime (of White supremacy)," and she shows in great detail how the structural violence of this colonial regime has pathologized all aspects of Indian policies, not only in education but also in agriculture, law, history and the social sciences. She persistently argues that the healing process to overcome the multiple traumata must include the colonizers just as necessarily as their colonial victims. Using exemplary autobiographies, novels and drama from contemporary Aboriginal literature in Canada, she contextualizes the works within the history of Canada's Indian policies and the pathologies resulting from them, in order to show how such texts, by releasing the internalized painful memories from the individual author's psyche and by exposing them to the public, and thus laying open the diseases for scrutiny, provide a hinge from which the healing may, can and does begin. I'd like to give you one quote, where, referring to Shirley Sterling's memoir *My Name is Seepeetza,* Jo-Ann explains the process from trauma to text and possible healing:

> Sterling is able to revisit a time of childhood trauma with an educated adult's ability to transform residual emotions into language. By translating the emotions of residential school experiences into language – something that many former students are unable to do – Sterling helps those readers distance themselves from their pain. When traumatic feelings become text, they can be examined and understood and, consequently, their power to cause pain is diminished. (202)

Jo-Ann Episkenew was an expert on Indigenous Literatures in Canada. The published version of her dissertation, *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing,* became a tremendous academic success. It was highlighted and honoured on May 30, 2010 at the annual "Learneds" Conference in Montreal with a special workshop in the "Author Meets Critics" series, and it garnered the two most prestigious book prizes in Saskatchewan.

Also in 2010, Jo-Ann took leave as an English professor from the First Nations University of Canada and accepted the directorship of the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Center at the University of Regina. There she continued to explore the power of stories in healing some of the traumata inflicted by the structural violence of internal colonialism, especially in the dramatic "Acting Out (But in a Good Way)" project, which she talked about at the Annual Meeting of the *Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries* in Grainau in 2013. She continued to "make relations" and concentrically to widen the scope of her operations, interacting with elders, community activists, healers, medical doctors, educators and social workers. Her colleague and research coordinator, Wendy Whitebear explained: "She didn't look at health as an 'I'm not feeling well; I'm going to the doctor' kind of health. … She meant the body, mind, spirit, relationships, governance and policies." (Meili 1–2).

And Jo-Ann reached out internationally. Medical professor Hans-Joachim Hannich, director of "Medical Psychology" and "Community Medicine" at the University of Greifswald, who had been one of the interdisciplinary members of Jo-Ann's PhD-committee ten years ago, was elected president of the International Association for Rural Health and Medicine in November 2015. The same month Jo-Ann reconnected with him, and wrote him the following, which I quote in full:

> Lieber Professor Dr. Hannich,
>
> Congratulations on your new appointment. This sounds as if it will be an interesting and challenging assignment. I suspect that the mental health of Germans and newcomers is on the minds of many people these days given the number of refugees and migrants who are now living in your country. I live in the province of Saskatchewan, which is bigger than Germany but has barely a million people. We've had approximately 180,000 people move here over the last 3 year, and it has certainly affected our lives. I can't image the work it must take to absorb as many newcomers as Germany has taken in.
>
> As Hartmut mentioned, my career has taken some interesting twists and turns. I work with colleagues in the medicine school and in the graduate school of public policy. Apparently a degree in literary studies can be very useful, indeed. One project that I've been working on for several years might be of interest to you in your capacity as the IARHM's Direktor. The project relates to the respiratory health of Indigenous people, and my research partners are physicians and epidemiologists from the Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan. (The First Nations Lung Health project came about after their team had completed a very large rural health study and realized

that they had not included the Indigenous people who live in rural Saskatchewan.) The project has a mental health component relating to the effects of racism and colonialism on the respiratory health of First Nations people. It has been very interesting.

I will likely be in Germany at the University of Trier next May at a conference on trauma. Perhaps I will see you there. It would be good to chat.

Herzlich,
Jo-Ann

Jo-Ann's work gives us a pertinent link and one opening to the overall topic of this volume. That she herself had her own traumata to deal with was known only to her family and some of her friends – she was no "cry baby" – but in one of her student-days poems, a hint is given, and I would like to conclude this memorial by quoting it:

"Thank You, Mr. Hughes"

Thank you, Mr. Hughes
for instilling in me
a love for
good books
ballet
theatre
and the Civilized Broadcasting Corporation.
And, wherever you are,
I want you to know
that it was not me
who told
how you gently taught
little girls
to touch you
in ways
considered improper. (1993: 180)

Sexual abuse is a major component in the multiple and systemic traumatisation, which generations of Aboriginal people were subjected to in residential schools. Jo-Ann as a Métis student never went to one. I do not know the context in which the abuse referred to in this poem took place, and there is no monolithic accusation here either.

Note

1 Jo-Ann was very conscious of the difference in North American and traditional German PhD programmes. At a conference on Six Nations Territory last fall I joked about

her having done her PhD in Germany, because it was "easier." And she replied in an email:

> I was thinking about your comments about the German PhD being "easy." I respectfully disagree. The most challenging thing about a thesis is finishing, which is a huge issue for North American universities, hence the increase in "course-based" Masters programs. I remember one of my classmates who was the smartest person I've ever met but couldn't finish the thesis. Universities here are addressing this by having course-based options and more and more courses required at the Ph.D. level. In other words, they are dumbing down their graduates and post-graduate degrees to ensure that tuition dollars continue to flow. Now PhD students are advised to choose their courses so that the required papers could be chapters and to use the comprehensive exam papers as chapters, all the while their supervisors are holding their hands. When I tell people that students in Germany are on their own once their proposal is passed, people are astonished. No one yet has said that it was easy – instead, they think that it would be significantly less tedious! (Personal email 2)

And she added in a later email the same day:

> I definitely like "our" old system better than the North American one. I was lucky since I was surrounded by friends and colleagues who were writing or had just completed writing theses on Indigenous issues, so loneliness was never an issue. I suspect Jeannette could say the same.
>
> I forgot to mentioned that here the supervisor is evaluated on the number of students s/he is able to graduate in a timely manner, and not only for their institution but for securing research funding. Yikes. The onus is on the supervisor, rather than the student.
>
> I better quit now. I'm getting all riled up. (Personal email 3)

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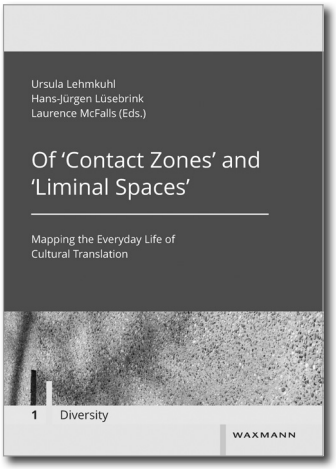

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Of 'Contact Zones' and 'Liminal Spaces'

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